RAISING A MOSES: DECONSTRUCTING OPPRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTS AND ELEVATING THE RELIGIO-RACIAL IDENTITY SALIENCE OF BLACK AMERICAN MUSLIM ADOLESCENT MALES

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In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praises belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

And blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (S).

All behaviors are considered by their intentions, and every person will be rewarded according to their intentions. –Prophet Muhammad (S)

Abstract

JIHAD SAAFIR: RAISING A MOSES: DECONSTRUCTING OPPRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTS AND ELEVATING THE RELIGIO-RACIAL IDENTITY SALIENCE OF BLACK AMERICAN MUSLIM ADOLESCENT MALES

Abstract

In the early part of the twentieth century, WEB Du Bois presented his famous theory of *double-consciousness,* which argues that Black Americans are constantly faced with the psychosocial dilemma of reconciling their Americanness with their African identity. Adding religion to the equation, Black American Muslims have a third consciousness to contend with. Within these multiple identities, Muslim Black American males must further wrestle with the question of their masculine identities, as white institutionalized racism has consistently denied Black American males access to expressions of the idealized American masculine self—a self that concurrently possesses the identities of a breadwinner, provider, procreator, and protector. While the new guard struggles to address identity issues of Black American Muslim males, the "early communities" demonstrated that a religio-racial orientation can be an effective conduit for identity development. This dissertation argues that the waning influence in the current Black mosque is due to several missing psychosocial components that were lost from the time of the early communities. Using the mutual critical correlation model and combining the disciplines of history, psychology, sociology, and theology, this interdisciplinary dissertation examined the factors that increase the religio-racial identity salience of Black American Muslim adolescent

males. The findings of this study showed the psychological factors that socializing agents (community members, peers, Muslim parents, Muslim teachers, etc.) should provide in their religio-racial education model for Black American adolescent males. These include: (a) basic psychological needs, (b) plausible possible selves, and (c) religious task value. The result of this study is the Religio-Racial Identity Salience (RRIS) framework. I anticipate this model will be later tested for its effectiveness and eventually adopted by Muslim socializing agents of Black American Muslim adolescent males.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my beloved mother and father. My beloved mother, Diane Saafir-Reese, made sure I read books about Black luminaries when I was a child. She introduced me to Frederick Douglass, Marcus Garvey, Sojourner Truth, and Malcolm X. She took me to reading programs held at the library on the weekends and in the summertime. My beloved father, Imam Saadiq Saafir, consistently emphasized how important it is to the Black American Muslim community that I finish school and earn my doctorate degree. As a teenager, I remember typing his notes that he would reference during his sermons and selling his lecture tapes every Friday after the congregational prayer and at Muslim conventions. Consequently, by watching him lead his congregation and provide direct services to those in need, I derived a positive possible self.

Without the use of fancy theories, my mother and father have consistently provided me with a needs-supportive environment by never shaming or demeaning my efforts in my pursuits in life. They were never controlling, and they always provided me with autonomy-support by giving me the necessary space to be creative and determine the path I wanted to pursue in life. Furthermore, they demonstrated relatedness-support by being supportive, loving, and always showing interest in my pursuits. Yet, they raised the subjective task value of Islamic practices by offering a clear rationale for its implementation. In addition, they never called people to actions that they did not do themselves. Truly, the Creator blessed me with the best mother and father in the world.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

For the Black American male growing up in America, adolescence can be a frightening experience. During this tumultuous period, Black American adolescent males are burdened with the difficult task of identity negotiation while enduring the toxic stress of racism. In the academic domain, for instance, Jacquelynne S. Eccles, Carol A. Wong, and Stephen C. Peck in their journal article titled, *Ethnicity as a social context for the development of African-American adolescents*, found that "daily experiences of racial discrimination can have profound negative effects on the development of African-American adolescents' academic motivation and achievement during the junior high school years."[1] Unfortunately, many Black American adolescent males are being socialized in problematic sociocultural contexts, being funneled through ill-equipped racist institutions, and lack access to important resources and plausible role-models. For this targeted group, surviving adolescence requires socializing agents that are well equipped to construct environments that foster healthy transitions into adulthood.

To further that goal, this dissertation explores the factors that contribute to developing a salient religio-racial identity amongst Black American adolescent males. Borrowing from Judith Weisenfeld, author of the acclaimed *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration*, this dissertation uses the term, "religio-racial identity" to capture how America's powerful racial hierarchy deeply impacts religious life, resulting in religion and race becoming nearly inseparable.[2] Nevertheless, religion and race play essential roles as

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[1] Jacquelynne S. Eccles, Carol A. Wong, and Stephen C. Peck, "Ethnicity as a Social Context for the Development of African-American Adolescents," Journal of School Psychology 44, no. 5 (2006): 420.

[2] Judith Weisenfeld, New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration (New York: New York University, 2016) 194.

"protective factors" that temper the negative effects of adverse social conditions during adolescence. Studies have shown that having a strong bond with "one's ethnic group is associated with higher self-esteem and better mental health."[3] Joseph Taylor, Linda Marie Chatters, and Jeff Levin, in their text titled *Religion in the Lives of African Americans: Social, Psychological, and Health Perspectives*, further assert, "African American religious life, in all its forms, is a vibrant, creative, and a resourceful testament to the power of faith to uplift and sustain in the face of prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion."[4] Therefore, it is clear that focusing on religio-racial identity development and strengthening the socializing agents attached to these identities can protect Black American Muslim adolescent males from negative developmental outcomes.

Furthermore, this theoretical study of religio-racial identity salience uses *Identity Theory's* conceptualizations as an undergirding framework that thoroughly explains the construct of the self. However, identity theory is not broad enough to satisfy the goals of this research. As such, another aim of this paper is to expand identity theory so that it can be utilized to address the intersectionality of being a Black American adolescent Muslim male. To reach my objective, I draw on Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci's self-determination theory (SDT), Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius' possible selves, and Eccles' Expectancy Value Model (EVM) to address identity theory's limitations. Additionally, I use Qur'anic passages, the exegesis of these passages, and narratives from the life of Prophet Muhammad to justify the application of these

[3] Eccles, Wong, and Peck, "Ethnicity as a Social Context for the Development of African-American Adolescents" 411.
[4] Robert Joseph, Linda M. Chatters, and Jeff Levin, Religion in the Lives of African Americans: Social, Psychological, and Health Perspectives (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc., 2004) 11.

psychological theories to Muslim life. Finally, I use the history of religio-racial movements and groups as historical case studies to solidify the arguments I put forth.

Ultimately, the purpose of this study is to explore the motivational factors that lead to adopting identities and performing identity-related behaviors, and identify effective behaviors; and the roles of socializing agents in the lives of Black American Muslim adolescent males. This will be done alongside a scaffolding of key passages in the Qur'an and examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad that form the basis for a Muslim identity development model, and an introduction of a paradigm of Islamic practical theology for religious identity development for Black American Muslim adolescent males. From an examination of existing research, this unique dissertation appears to be the first study of its kind.

Background

Considering the well-documented history of racial discrimination in America, research surrounding identity development is an important topic for Black American adolescent males. Black identity studies can be traced back to early theorists such as WEB DuBois, Ruth Horowitz, Kenneth and Mammie Clark, and others. In 1903, DuBois in his famous book, *The Soul of Black Folk*, introduced the concept of *double consciousness*. He asserted, "One ever feels his two-ness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."[5] DuBois's double consciousness or double identity became a springboard by which others would follow.

For instance, in 1939, Horowitz conducted what many considered to be the first modern empirical study of racial identity in Black American children.[6] Her research concluded that

[5] W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folks (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994) 2.
[6] "Ruth Hartley Horowitz," *Psychology's Feminist Voices,* http://www.feministvoices.com/ruth-hartley-horowitz/

Black American children were oriented to identify with Whiteness over Blackness.[7] Building from the research techniques of Horowitz, Kenneth, and Mamie Clark conducted several studies elucidating self-identification among Black American children. In their famous *doll test* in 1947, they presented Black American children from both the northern and southern regions of the U.S. with the option to select from four dolls, two white with yellow hair and two brown with black hair. Most of the children in the study preferred the white dolls over the brown dolls citing, "cause he's pretty" or "cause he's white."[8] Their research indicated early racial awareness and the preference for whiteness in Black American children. Taking the discussion further, *Nigrescence* theorists sought ways to overcome *negromachy*—a mental illness that leads to Black Americans questioning their self-worth and depending heavily on white society for their self-definition.[9]

Attempting to temper the impact of racial discrimination and other impediments on identity development, this dissertation explores religion, in particular Islam, as a possible conduit for Black American identity development and prosocial behaviors related to identity. Studies have shown that religion (not just Islam) helps people when they are challenged by difficult circumstances.[10] Historically, religious beliefs and practices have played a prominent role and served a variety of functions in the daily lives of Black Americans. These functions include but are not limited to hope-building, fostering resilience in the face of oppressive circumstances,

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[7] Ibid.
[8] M.P. Clark, K.B., Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children.Pdf," Social Psychology, 1947, 178.
[9] William E. Cross Jr., "The Thomas and Cross Models of Psychological Nigrescence: A Review," The Journal of Black Psychology 5, no. 1 (1978): 13–14.
[10] Cheryl L. Holt, Emily Schulz, and Theresa A. Wynn, "Perceptions of the Religion-Health Connection Among African Americans in the Southeastern United States: Sex, Age, and Urban/Rural Differences," Health Education and Behavior 36, no. 1 (2009): 3.

elucidating the unseen dimensions of life, and "providing a system of shared meanings and social practices."[11] As Lee H. Butler put it, "When the world told us we were less than human, we experienced in our being that we were fully human and loved by God."[12]

Additionally, studies have indicated positive correlations between religion and several domains including mortality, health, mental health, and school self-esteem.[13] Further confirming the significance of studying identity through a religious lens, Carol A. Markstrom asserts that the "exploration of spiritual and religious domains are meaningful in the identity formation process of adolescence." Again, the scarcity of literature on the intersectionality of being Black American, Muslim, and male is surprising considering that there are many young men who grew up with the Islamic faith as a fundamental shaper of their identity.

Yet, being religious, in particular being Muslim, in a racialized environment adds another layer of conflict to an already contorted identity development process for Black American adolescents. Yusuf Nuruddin, in his chapter titled, "African-American Muslims and the Question of Identity: Between Traditional Islam, African Heritage, and the American Way," argues that African-American Muslims have inherited a "triple heritage" consisting of (1) *Westernization,* (2) *re-Africanization,* and (3) *re-Islamization*.[14] Westernization refers to life during the postbellum period when former African slaves found themselves completely alienated from their

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[11] Pamela Ebstyne King, "Religion and Identity : The Role of Ideological , Social , and Spiritual Contexts," Applied Developmental Science 7, no. 3 (2003): 197.
[12] Lee H. Butler, Jr., *Liberating Our Dignity, Saving Our Souls: A New Theory of African American Identity Formation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 20.
[13] Carol A. Markstrom, "Religious Involvement and Adolescent Psychosocial Development," Journal of Adolescence 22, no. jado.1999.0211 (1999): 205.
[14] Yusuf Nuruddin, "African-American Muslims and the Question of Identity," in *Muslims on the Americanization Path?,* ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 215–62.

African heritage and were forced to assimilate into the western lifestyle.[15] Re-Africanization suggests that Westernized Africans desired to reconnect with their African identity.[16] While, re-Islamization correlates with re-Africanization in that the ancestors of West Africans were often Muslims and, therefore, re-connecting with their African heritage meant reconnecting with their Islamic heritage.[17] Unpacking this model even further, Nuruddin asserts,

> Thus the African-American Muslim community has experienced ideological conflict in several directions. Externally, it has had to deal with the European-American and the African-American establishments in this country and with various factions of the global *umma* or worldwide Muslim community. Internally, it has come up against the ideologies of Islamic cultural nationalists, Islamic separatists, and Islamic ecumenicalists. These encounters, of course, form the social, cultural, and political underpinnings of the social-psychological conflict of identity that the African-American community continues to undergo.[18]

Seemingly, Nuruddin proves that a religio-racial identity consists of more layers of conflict than just a racial identity.

Besides the conflicts arising from being Black American and Muslim, possessing the male identity adds another degree of conflict. Historically, institutionalized racism has produced adverse conditions for Black American males living in the United States. In 2018, the rate of Black American male imprisonment was 5.8 times that of White American males.[19] Furthermore, in 2015, 6,152 Black American males were killed—the most homicide victims in the United States that year.[20] There is also a well-documented history of Black American male

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] E. Ann Carson, *Prisoners in 2018* (Washington DC: US Dept of Justice, 2020). Retrieved from https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p18.pdf
[20]Violence Policy Center, *Black Homicide Victimization in the United States.* Retrieved from http://www.vpc.org/studies/blackhomicide18.pdf

exclusion and underachievement in America's educational systems. In both the academic and occupational sectors, Black American males are outperformed by their white counterparts. The low academic performance among Black Americans, according to Signithia Fordham and John U. Ogbu, is associated with limited opportunities in adult life.[21] For Black Americans, achieving academic success has never equated to access to jobs, wages, and other benefits. To these ends, environments in which racial discrimination takes place have a profound effect on the confidence of Black American adolescent males.

As we have shown, there are many issues to tackle when it comes to the intersectionality of being Black American, Muslim, and male. Considering the many angles that are available when writing about identity, I decided to focus my research on Identity Theory's concepts of commitment and identity salience. This dissertation is not a critical analysis of the various groups and ideologies within the Black American Muslim communities. Instead, the purpose of this dissertation is to identify proven factors that can be applied to most Islamic and Islamic-inspired groups seeking to construct environments that foster the healthy formation of Black American Muslim male identities.

The rest of the dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter 1 includes the introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the study, genealogy of Islamic education, definition of terms, and the strengths and limitations of the research. Chapter 2 includes a review of existing literature on the theories of identities, including adolescent identity, Black identity, and Muslim identity.

[21] Signithia Fordham and John U Ogbu, "Black Students ' School Success: Coping with the " Burden of ' Acting White "" 18, no. 3 (1986): 179.

Chapter 3 is an in-depth examination of Islam, *Ilm an-Nafsiyyah*, and Psychology, specifically analyzing if the Qur'an's concept of the *Nafs* matches modern psychology's concept of the Self. Chapter 4 uses the topics of the previous chapters to develop a religious learning environment that provides the psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness to Black American Muslim male adolescents.

Chapter 5 examines the shaping of Black American adolescent Muslim identities with possible selves; Chapter 6 includes a model for influencing religious task value for Black American adolescent Muslim males. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the new paradigm of the Religio-Racial Identity Salience (RRIS) model.

Problem Statement

The problem necessitating this dissertation is that the influence of the Black mosque continues to wane, leaving Black American adolescent males vulnerable to the social impediments that stem from systemic racism and discrimination. Joshua Aronson and Claude M. Steele, for example, argue that performance in intellectual domains can be harmed by the prospect of confirming a negative stereotype.[22] Moreover, many Black American adolescent males are in social contexts that define academic success as "acting white."[23] Fordham and Ogbu also acknowledge the existence of a "job ceiling" that diminishes the enthusiasm that Black American adolescent males apply to school. Daphna Oyserman, Joel Ager, and Larry Gant assert that "Black American adolescents are likely to experience social contexts that do not afford construction of plausible futures in which school success leads to occupational success in

[22] Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69, no. 5 (1995): 797–811, https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797. 797.
[23] Fordham and Ogbu, "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the ' Burden of ' Acting White''"" 177.

adulthood."[24] Not to mention, the well-publicized school-to-prison pipeline and the racial profiling against Black American adolescent males that has claimed the lives of Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, and others. To this end, what is the role of religio-racial identities, in particular being Black American and Muslim, in offsetting the debilitating and deadly effects of racism?

Explaining the historical role of Islam in the life of Black American males, Sherman A. Jackson, author of *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection,* asserts that, "Black masculinity being historically threatening to and threatened by American white supremacy, Islam has represented a haven of sorts for black manhood."[25] For my father, Saadiq Saafir, and Black American men like him, Islam offered a sense of self—a quality that white supremacy always threatened to obliterate. In 1970, after moving to California from East Chicago, my father converted into the Nation of Islam and wrote his parents a four-page letter explaining his reasons for converting. In this letter, he wrote, "For the first time, I know who I am and what my purpose is." Academic scholarship and personal narratives like that of my father have long established Islam as an effective conduit offering identity development for Black American males through acts such as name-changing, religious rituals, community building, and more. This dissertation is more interested in the factors that increase the salience of Black American Muslim identity in the life of Black American Muslim adolescent males.

After analyzing existing research, we have determined that several factors influence the salience of an identity in a situation: basic psychological needs, possible selves, subjective task

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[24] Daphna Oyserman, Joel Ager, and Larry Gant, "A Socially Contextualized Model of African American Idenity: Possible Selves and School Persistence," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 69, no. 6 (1995): 1217.

[25] Sherman A. Jackson, Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 278.

value. These key components are extracted from well-known theories including identity theory, self-determination theory (SDT), possible selves theory, and expectancy value model of motivated behavioral choices (EVM).

Significance of This Study

This study is significant because history has proven that the effectiveness of an Islamic ideology relies less on its orthodoxy inasmuch as it relies on the presence of certain psychosocial factors. Offering one explanation of the waning influence of the Black *sunni* mosque, Aminah Beverley McCloud, author of the acclaimed text *African American Islam,* divides the Black American Muslim experience in Islam into two themes: 1) the formation of '*asabiya* or kinship relations and 2) the experience of *ummah* or community.[26] The first theme, formation of '*asabiya,* describes the nationalistic Black Muslims of the first half of the twentieth century that were mission-driven and focused on "nation-building."[27] The second theme, the experience of *ummah,* represents the second half of the twentieth century that saw Black Americans seeking to abandon '*asabiyah* and unite with others across "national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries."[28] McCloud highlights the tension that seems to exist between these two tendencies.

Seemingly, when earlier Black American Muslim communities focused on the formation of '*asabiyah,* the primary needs of the Black American community were prioritized. During the later guards' experience of *ummah,* McCloud points out, Black American Muslims deemed '*asabiya* as heretical and shifted their focus from kinship needs to assimilating into the mainstream body of Muslims.[29] Speaking on this phenomenon, she asserts, "Unfortunately, this

[26] Aminah McCloud, *African American Islam* (Routledge: New York, 1994), 4.
[27] Ibid., 5
[28] Ibid., 4
[29] Ibid., 5

desire to avoid heresy has often translated to an inability to effectively focus attention and resources on problems in Black American communities across the country."[30] Adding to the discussion, Jackson argues,

> …under the "Islam" of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, education, work, and community-uplift were synonymous with Black Muslim, Sunni Islam was increasingly being invoked as a reason not to work (for the infidel), not to be educated (in the infidel's institutions), and not to be involved in the (infidel) community. At least as far as the Old Guard was concerned, one could now almost assume that the stricter a Black American Sunni Muslim adhered to Islam, the less educated, less gainfully employed and less civic-minded he or she was likely to be. In short, on the new, immigrant-influenced understanding of Islam, Sunnism was in many ways becoming a cause rather than a solution to the problem of Black American Muslim dysfunctionality in America.[31]

Examining both McCloud and Jackson's assertion, the question is: What aspects made Sunnism the cause to Black American Muslim dysfunctionality in America? This dissertation argues that *Sunnism* itself was not to blame for black dysfunctionality. The assumption, instead, is that there were several psychosocial components that were compromised when Black Americans transitioned from '*asabiyah* to *ummah*. With the absence of certain psychosocial components, dysfunctionality is inevitable.

Research Questions

Five essential questions will guide this research:

1. What factors raise the religio-racial identity of Black American Muslim adolescent males on the salience hierarchy?
2. What behaviors of socializing agents motivate prosocial behaviors in Black American adolescent males?

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection*, Kindle 993 of 3330.

3. How does racial discrimination impact the religio-racial identity salience of Black American Muslim adolescent males?
4. What models can be effectively applied to Muslim schools and mosque educating Black American Muslim adolescent male students?
5. What parenting strategies can be effectively applied by parents of Black American Muslim adolescent males?

Method

The *method of correlation* was first proposed by renowned theologian, Paul Tillich. Through this method, he analyzed the modern human condition using classical Christian symbols. Building upon the works of Tillich were theologians Seward Hiltner and David Tracy. Both Hiltner and Tracy veered from Tillich's unidirectional model—which gave the Christian tradition the authority to answer existential questions posed by culture—and suggested the exchange between the tradition and culture be dialectical. In terms of pastoral theology, Hiltner recognized the value in the questions and answers that arose from the pastoral experience.[32] Placing the rich pastoral experience in dialogue with the Christian tradition led to the emergence of a *mutually critical correlation model*. Correspondingly, Tracy placed the responsibility on the contemporary theologian to correlate the questions and answers that emerge from the symbols of the Christian message and the modern cultural situation.[33] His model of critical correlation involved the dialogue of two primary theological sources: 1) "the Christian text" and 2)

[32] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 46.
[33] David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 3.

"common human experience and language."[34] For this dissertation, the Qur'an and *hadith* will be the primary theological sources. Criticizing Tillich's models, Tracy argues,

> Tillich's method does not actually correlate; it juxtaposes questions from the "situation" with answers from the "message." Insofar as this critique is true, the contemporary theologian can accept Tillich's articulation of the need for a method of correlation, but he cannot accept Tillich's own model for theology as one which actually correlates.[35]

For Tracy, theology is only effective if both sources are allowed to provide questions and answers, a task he believed Tillich's method failed at.

To achieve the aims of this dissertation, I employ the mutually critical correlation model, as articulated by Tracy. This method allows relevant questions to be posed by philosophy, psychology, and other similar discourses—in this case, social-psychological identity studies pertaining to Black American Muslim adolescent males. The critical mutual correlation method will help mediate the relationship between Islamic texts and socio-psychological theories. Placing modern constructs such as identity theory, SDT, EVM, and possible selves in conversation with primary Islamic texts requires a systematic method such as critical mutual correlation.

Researcher Background

I am a second-generation Black American Muslim heterosexual male, born to Black American Muslim parents, Saadiq Saafir, my father, who became Muslim through the Nation of Islam in 1971 and Diane Saafir, my mother, who joined the NOI in 1974. Both transitioned into mainstream Islam in 1975 under the directives of Imam Waarith D. Muhammad after the passing of his father, Elijah Muhammad. Prior to the transition, the NOI was a black separatist group that believed Black people were gods and white people were devils. I consider the NOI as having a

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 46

black theology that endeavors to address issues of brokenness in the Black American community. Although I was never a member of the NOI, Elijah Muhammad's social philosophy informs my role as an imam of a predominately Black American mosque in South Los Angeles and director of a full-time Muslim private school (pre-k to 7th grade). Finally, I am a PhD student at Claremont School of Theology training to become a Muslim practical theologian.

Definitions of Terms

Adolescence: Besides the markers of physical changes, this stage of life is represented by new cognitive skills, increased emotional expressiveness, and a deeper sense of self. For this dissertation, adolescence is divided into three different stages: (a) early adolescence (10-14 years), (b) middle adolescence (15-16 years), and (c) late adolescence (16-20 years). The term adolescence includes all three of these stages.

Black American: For this dissertation, a Black American or an African American is a person of African descent who was born and raised in America. This dissertation employs the term Black American with more frequency for two reasons: (a) many Black Americans are unfamiliar with the African continent and the African cultural and sociopolitical landscape, and (b) Black Americans have solidified over four hundred years of historical capital in America, a fact that the term African American is unable to fully capture.

Intersectionality: This term was first used by critical race theorist and professor of law, Kimberle Crenshaw.[36] She used the term to highlight the interaction between race and gender, especially in the lives of Black American women.[37] Examining the terms Black American and woman separately cannot capture the full spectrum of what it means when being a Black

[36] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1244.
[37] Ibid.

American and woman intersect.[38] This dissertation borrows the term and applies it to being Black American, Muslim, adolescent, and male.

Practical Theology: My understanding of practical theology has been informed by the writings of prominent Christian practical theologians including Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Dale P. Andrews, and Richard R. Osmer. Practical theology is primarily concerned with the human performance of theology in everyday life. As an academic discipline, however, practical theology focuses on developing religious leadership that seeks to enhance the religious life of their local congregations, the social services of their congregation, and public influence of their religious institution.[39] For greater comprehension of the meaning, Miller-McLemore associates the words action, practice, praxis, experience, situation, event, and performance with the definition of practical theology.[40] Additionally, Andrews sees practical theology as placing theology, theory, and practice in conversation with one another.[41] To these ends, practical theology endeavors to sever the chasm that exists between theory and practice.

As a Muslim attempting to locate practical theology in the Muslim context, I hold one concern with the term practical theology. Classical Islam uses the term *fiqh* or Islamic law in the way that Christians use the word theology. For many Muslim scholars, theology and religious law are considered distinct disciplines in Islamic studies. Issues such as abortion, environmental justice, and interfaith relations, for example, would be considered Islamic law and not

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[38] Ibid.
[39] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "The Contributions of Practical Theology," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 14.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches* (Louisville: Westminister John Knox Press, 2002), 122.

theology.[42] However, with more interaction between Christian and Muslim scholarship, the broader definition of theology has been gaining more ground with contemporary Islamic scholarship.

Religious Education: As a broad discipline applied to a multitude of faith traditions, Carol Lakey Hess defines religious education as "the re-asking and re-engagement of the depth questions a religious tradition has asked."[43][44] Hess further asserts, "The basic approach to education that I encourage in congregations and religious communities, taught and studied as a discipline in the academy, is what I call "Q and W" –a "questioning and wrestling."[45] She borrows this understanding from Pualo Freire and Antonio Faundez and their acclaimed text, *Learning to Question*. Freire and Faundez posit "that education begins with curiosity, existential questions, and the risk to rethink and reinvent existing answers."[46] Essentially, the questioning and wrestling unlocks creativity and problem solving for the learners of religion.[47]

Islamic Education: Islamic education is usually characterized by the Arabic terms *tarbīyah* or upbringing, *ta'līm* or teaching, and *ta'dīb* or moral discipline. *Tarbīyah* implies that the *murabbi* or educator aims to facilitate the gradual spiritual and intellectual development of the learner until a viable goal is reached. *Ta'lim* is the lesson about which the *mu'allim* is

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[42] Umar F. Abd-Allah, "Theological Dimensions of Islamic Law," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 237.
[43] Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 301.
[44] Carol Lakey Hess, "Religious Education," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 301.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

deliberate about its pedagogy and the time, and space wherein it will take place, while *ta'dīb* is concerned with etiquettes that promote ethical behavior such as care and compassion.

Furthermore, classical scholars have divided Islamic education into two categories including: (1) education that is binding on the individual (*fard 'ayn*); (2) and education that is binding on the community (*fard kifāyah*). Education that is personally binding on an individual includes knowing how to perform devotional acts such as prayer, fasting, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and more. Knowledge that is binding on a Muslim community includes the education that one person or a segment of the community must have in order for the community to sustain itself. For instance, the community is responsible on ensuring that one of its members must learn how to become an imam so that religious instruction takes place. If this obligation is not fulfilled, the entire community incurs a sin with God.

Islamic Education in the Black American Context: Islamic education in the Black American context can be traced back to the fifteenth century whence Africans were forcibly brought to the Americas and reduced to chattel. On the plantations, African Muslims strove with meager resources to maintain a semblance of the religious upbringing they witnessed in their homelands, an upbringing that included memorizing portions or the entire Qur'an and learning Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history, and the Arabic language. Slave accounts and narratives indicate some kept their Arabic names and they observed their faith tenets including performing their Muslim prayers in secret as well as in the open, they wrote copies of the Qur'ān in the Arabic language, and more.[48]

Post-emancipation, in the twentieth century, the Ahmadiyya movement sent missionaries and distributed Islamic paraphernalia resulting in the conversion of hundreds of African

[48] Ibid., 143.

Americans to their version of Islam. Also, in 1913, Noble Drew Ali became the founder of the first Black Islamic sect in America. His followers wore black fezzes and white turbans; they also carried nationality cards identifying them as olive-skinned Asiatic people who were the descendants of Moroccans or Moors.[49] In addition, their sacred text was the Holy Koran, also called Circle Seven Koran, written by Ali in 1927.[50]

After Ali's demise, the climate was ripe and ready to receive the Pan-African ideas of the Nation of Islam (NOI). Elijah Muhammad, founder of the NOI, taught his followers that his teacher Wallace D. Fard was the incarnation of God on Earth. Additionally, Elijah taught mythological stories surrounding the origins of black and white people. He also taught them which foods were harmful and which foods promoted physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing in his book, *How to Eat to Live*. Moreover, Elijah Muhammad promoted economic independence from white America. Consequently, at its peak under Elijah Muhammad, the NOI owned the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, thousands of acres of farmland, the *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper, housing complexes, an aircraft, and retail and wholesale businesses.

In 1975, after Elijah's death, his son W.D. Muhammad became the new supreme leader of the Nation of Islam.[51] In less than a decade, he successfully transformed the Nation of Islam from a black separatist movement based in black theology into orthodox Islam, a religion based on a message of universalism. He changed the NOI terminology into that of Sunni nomenclature. For instance, instead of being called a "supreme minister," he accepted the orthodox Islamic title of *imam*. Temples were converted to "masjids" (Arabic for mosque). American patriotism was

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 93.
[51] Lost Found, The African American's Journey to Al-Islam, dir. Shareef Nasir (Mizan Studios, 2010).

promoted and white people were no longer blanketed as devils. Several of the Nation of Islam's foundational beliefs including Yacub's theory, Elijah Muhammad's messengership, and Wallace D. Fard's divinity were all retired as myths.

Less prominent Black American Sunni Movements that provided Islamic education included the Hanafi Madhhab Movement led by Abdul Khaalis, the Darul Islam Movement led by Yahya Abdul-Kareem, the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood founded by Shaykh Khalid Ahmad Tawfiq, the Islamic Party founded by Muzzafruddin, and more. Describing Islamic education in America today, Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith contend, "Islamic education in America now takes place in a variety of venues, including homes, Sunday/weekend schools, summer camps, and *halaqas* or study circles, as well as at conventions and through annual symposia."[52]

Religious Teacher: This dissertation uses the term *religious teacher* to refer to teachers that are employed at private Muslim and secular schools, weekend religious instructors, youth leaders, *imams* or anyone who disseminates instruction to Black American Muslim adolescent males.

Identity: During adolescence, according to many theorists, individuals began to ask the question, "Who am I?" For adolescents, answering this question and adopting an identity means deriving self-conceptions from their past, present, and future to form a unified whole. To this end, *Identity* consists of one's aims, beliefs, individual traits and characteristics, as well as one's role within their social group. In premodern societies, identity formation mainly consisted of individuals adapting to a prescribed cultural script.[53] Postmodern Western societies, on the other

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[52] Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, *Introduction: The Challenge of Islamic Education in North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc.), 135.
[53] James E. Cote, Identity, Formation, Agency, and Culture, 1.

hand, give individuals more of a right to choose in matters of self-definition. Moreover, the self is comprised of multiple identities, each indicating its membership within a specific group. For instance, a person can be a democrat, which is associated with the Democratic party, and at the same time a mother, which is attached to her family.

Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets discuss three divisions of identities: a) role identities, b) social identities, and c) person identities. Role identities link a person to their position in a social structure such as a parent, employee, or spouse.[54] Social identities pertain to group affiliations such as one's religion, social class, race, culture, or identities linking to a specific social group or relationship.[55] Person identities serve the psychological function of making one feel unique such as more sophisticated or less controlling.[56]

Socializing Agents: Socializing agents refer to the human influences that are in one's social environments including parents, teachers, politicians, clergy leaders, peers, celebrities, and others. People are motivated to perform the behaviors that socializing agents expect, compel, promote, or praise. Considering the powerful influence of parents and teachers, this dissertation will direct most of its suggestion to parents and religious teachers. Parents and religious teachers can create the environmental factors that lead to identity internalization. In the academic domain, for example, the studies show that "autonomy support and structure" imbued by parents and teachers predict greater school engagement and psychological well-being.[57]

Strengths and Limitations

[54] Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 112.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 351.

The first limitation of this study is that the literature about Black American Muslim adolescent males is sparse and, therefore, I will rely on studies and theories that focus on other ethnic groups. For this study, I applied a racial as well as religious lens to the theories in this study to make it relevant. In addition, this study is not backed by a case study or research that is conducted on the target group. However, the purpose of this study is that it is an antecedent to a future phenomenological case study.

Regarding its strengths, this study is backed by heavily reviewed theories in the fields of psychology and sociology. The findings in this study will benefit communities that are looking to enhance their programming for their Black American male congregants. Furthermore, Black American Muslims often complain about racism within immigrant-majority communities. These findings will help non-Black American organizations better accommodate their Black American adolescent male congregants. Finally, this study is significant in that there is little to no existing literature addressing Black American Muslim identity development working through the lenses of psychology, sociology, and Islamic theology.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an introduction that elucidated the subject matter and laid the foundation of this dissertation. The statement of problem expounded upon the issues that this dissertation will address and the definition of terms featured significant terms of this project. I concluded this chapter by articulating the strengths and limitations of this dissertation. Chapter 2 will include a review of existing literature and an analysis of how it relates to the current research.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this interdisciplinary study was to examine the factors that help Black American Muslim adolescent males solidify their religio-racial identity while living in a racist culture. The research expands the understanding of identity theory's conceptualizations of identity salience and commitment. The significance of this study is the findings provide mosques, centers, and schools serving Black Muslim males with information on how to increase the salience of this target group's religio-racial identity.

This chapter explores the key literature in the fields of psychology, Africana Islamic studies, identity studies, and Black identity studies. Literature in these fields support the findings of this dissertation. I divide this chapter into the following topics: (a) psychological theoretical frameworks, (b) historical overview of religious education in the African American context, (c) adolescent identity development studies, (d) Black identity studies, (d) Muslim identity development studies, and (e) Impediments to Identity Development for Black American Males. We conclude this chapter by providing a basic summary of the literature.

Social Psychological Theoretical Frameworks

For the purpose of this current study, four theories helped explain the process of raising the salience of religio-racial identity of Black American Muslim adolescent males including: (a) identity theory, (b) self-determination theory, (c) possible selves theory, and (d) expectancy value theory. Identity theory was advocated by Sheldon Stryker and Peter Burke who argued that individual's identities are attached to their membership in social groups.[58] Richard M. Ryan and

[58] Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets, Identity Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

Edward L. Deci's self-determination theory focuses on the basic psychological needs that lead to identity internalization. Possible selves theory, elucidated by Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius, offers insight into how the cognitive formulation of future selves impacts identity development. Jacquelynne Eccles's discussion of expectancy value theory expectancy posits that people adopt identities based on perceptions of personal efficacy and subjective task value. Synthesizing these theories helped explain how socializing agents can contribute to influencing identity commitment and identity salience.

Identity Theory

Building off the structural symbolic interactionist framework, Stryker's argues that the self is connected to the roles that it plays in social networks. According to Stryker, the self is complex and is comprised of multiple parts or identities.[59] For instance, the self can simultaneously possess "familial identities, political identities, occupational identities, and so on."[60] Explaining identity theory's premier concept of *identity salience,* Stryker asserts that persons' identities are structured into a "hierarchy of salience" and the frequency of calling upon that identity hinges on its position within this hierarchy.[61] He gives the example of Mayor Wagner of New York, who decided not to run for another term, giving the reasoning that he wanted to focus on his relationship with his sons.[62] Offering an explanation to this scenario, Stryker contends that those who criticized the Mayor for his choice to put his family first may

[59] Sheldon Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," Journal of Marriage and Family 30, no. 4 (1968): 559.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., 560.
[62] Ibid., 561.

not have had the familial identity salience that is needed to understand the Mayor's decision and see it as genuine.[63]

Another key concept, *commitment*, is measured by the "cost" of shedding an identity and disrupting key relationship patterns in one's social network.[64] If the cost of shedding the identity is high, the commitment level to the identity is likewise high. According to Stryker, commitment has two dimensions: (a) *extensivity* or the amount of social ties one has to relationship partners in a given identity or (b) *intensivity* or the connections one has to relationship partners within a given identity.[65] In a study about religious identity, Stryker and Serpe found that higher commitment levels within a religious organization are tied to religious identities positioned higher on the salience hierarchy, which is also tied to more time spent in religious activities.[66] In sum, the level of commitment to one's role within a social group is usually a predictor of the salience of an identity.

Contributing another layer to identity theory that is helpful to the current study, Burke posits that an identity "is composed of four basic components, including: input, identity standard, a comparator, and an output."[67] Input refers to how one perceives their behavior with the goal of matching their behavior with the set of meanings that make up the identity standard. A boxer, attempting to match the meanings attributed to the boxer identity standard, observes his own behavior and judges whether or not his grit matches the requirements of the identity standard. Furthermore, every identity has a set of meanings that make up the identity standard. For

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 560.
[65] Ibid., 561.
[66] Sheldon Stryker and Richard T Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," in Commitment, Identity Salience, and Role Behavior: Theory and Research Example, ed. William Ickes and Eric S. Knowles (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982), 213.
[67] Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory,* 62.

instance, Burke and Stet mention that a college student's identity may contain four meanings, including "academic ability, intellectualism, sociability, and assertiveness."[68] The comparator compares the data from the input perceptions and the set of meanings in the identity standard.[69] Finally, the output refers to the adjusted behavior that is performed after the agent realizes that his behavior does not meet the identity standard. They give the example of a male who is not meeting the existing identity standard and, therefore, alters his behavior to meet the standard.[70]

Self Determination Theory

Although Identity theory is considered distinguished in the fields of sociology and social psychology, it has a few limitations. I look to Deci and Ryan and their explanation of the Self-determination theory (SDT) to address, in particular, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors and basic psychological needs for the concept of commitment. Intrinsic motivation refers to acting out of one's "inherent satisfaction."[71] Deci and Ryan give the example of a healthy child whose activity is solely based on the internal factors of inquisitiveness and playfulness and not based on a guarantee of an external reward. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation, for Deci and Ryan, connotes performing behaviors in order to attain a desired outcome. For instance, people find motivation from external factors such as "bribes" and "external coercion."[72] This type of motivation is seen in the child whose parents threaten him with punishment if he does not complete his homework. With SDT as a research framework, creating an environment that advances personal growth, efficacy, and psychological well-being becomes central concerns.

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[68] Ibid., 64.
[69] Ibid., 66.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, Self-Determination Theory (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 71.
[72] Ibid., 69.

To this end, SDT argues that to reach optimal well-being every human being has three inherent psychological needs that must be fulfilled: (1) *competence*, (2) *autonomy*, and (3) *relatedness*. Competence implies that people perform behaviors through which they perceive they can be successful.[73] For example, an employee feels competent when he perceives that he can successfully complete a task at work.

Autonomy refers to actions that are performed without coercion, utilizing the freedom of choice. In work environments, the employee feels autonomous support when they can perform their work task without the constant threat of peer embarrassment, termination, or pay reduction. SDT's understanding of autonomy is not synonymous with independence. SDT's definition of autonomy can function well in paradigms of dependence and independence and refers to "feelings of volition."[74]

Alternatively, relatedness is concerned with a person's connection and sense of belonging within his social group. For example, when a young person's relatives showed up to her basketball game and cheered her team's victory, they were displaying support, approval, and interest in her choice to play. I argue that socializers that provide these three basic needs for African American Muslim adolescent males can increase their commitment to an identity.

Further highlighting the theoretical, experiential, and functional aspects of motivation, Deci and Ryan proposed a continuum based on their organismic integration theory (OIT), another sub-theory of SDT that elaborates upon the different types of motivation. According to this continuum, motivation is divided into one of three categories including: 1) amotivation, 2) extrinsic motivation, and 3) intrinsic motivation. Amotivation implies nonaction or

[73] Ibid., 73.
[74] Ibid., 74.

unintentionally performing an act. A person in this state may not value the activity; may feel incompetent performing the activity; or may not expect the activity to yield a desired outcome.[75]

According to the continuum, there are four regulatory styles for extrinsic motivation including: 1) *external regulation*, 2) *introjected regulation*, 3) *identified regulation*, and 4) *integrated regulation*. *External regulation* refers to behaviors that are acted out in exchange for a reward.[76] *Introjected regulation* suggests that the activity is done to reduce feelings of guilt or to enhance self-esteem.[77] This category, according to Deci and Ryan, is related to increased anxiety. *Identified regulation*, more autonomous than the first two categories, alludes to behavior that is externally motivated but personally valued by the one who performs the act.[78] According to Deci and Ryan, this category was "associated with more interest and enjoyment of school and with more positive coping styles, as well as with expending more effort."[79] However, the most autonomous extrinsic motivation, *integrated regulation*, refers to behavior that is fully embraced and merged with the self.[80]

Expectancy Value Model

While Stryker's identity theory considers relationship extensivity and intensivity and SDT promotes a needs-based approach, the expectancy-value theory (EVM) brings a person's relative subjective task values into the conversation. With this model, Eccles and her associates attempt to understand the layers of identity formation, particularly during adolescence. She posit that peoples' motivation to act are informed by two perceptions: 1) "perceptions related to skills,

[75] Ibid., 72.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid., 73.
[80] Ibid., 72.

characteristics, and competencies, and 2) perceptions related to personal values and goals."[81] Eccles confirms the works of earlier theorists, including SDT, suggest that personal feelings of competence and efficacy play a major role in behavior choice. In other words, people tend to engage in activities that they sense a high probability of success. What Eccles terms as a person's "ability self-concepts and perceptions of task difficulty" are psychological indicators of expectations for their success in a certain task.[82] These ability self-concepts derive from several social variables including social comparisons with those performing a similar task, measuring the difficulty of the task, measuring the amount of time it would take to become good at performing the task, examining their own intellect regarding the task, and surveying the opinions of others (parents, teachers, peers, and etc.) regarding their performance of the tasks. Another thing to consider is that having competence in a behavior is not a concern when a person does not value the behavior.[83]

Therefore, besides personal competency, people also chose to adopt an identity based on its subjective task value. That is, people chose to engage in behaviors due to its quality. Eccles and her colleges proposed four value categories that enhance the quality of a task, including: 1) the interest value of the task; 2) the utility value of the task; 3) attainment value of the task; and the 4) perceived cost of the task. *Interest value* depends on the intrinsic enjoyment of participating in the activity. Furthermore, the pleasure received from performing the task can lead to competency.[84] With the combined variables of enjoyment and competence, the activity

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[81] Jacquelynne Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action," *Educational Psychologist* 44, no. 2 (2009): 78–89, https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520902832368.
[82] Ibid., 82.
[83] Ibid., 84.
[84] Ibid., 83.

can become integrated into the personal identity. *Utility value* is measured by how much the task fits into a future goal, for example, taking a course to fulfill degree requirements, while *attainment value* is the value a task has because it satisfies a fundamental aspect of an individual's self-image.[8586] For instance, if a defining aspect of one's self-image is helping people then they will more than likely chose a career path that is premised upon such.[87] Finally, *perceived cost* refers to the psychological and emotional toll that the activity takes on the individual. Cost is also associated with the time, energy, and resources that the tasks takes to accomplish. Having low task value in one of these four categories can have a significant effect on one's commitment to an identity.

Applying the expectancy value framework to the domain of gender, Eccles demonstrates how social group's influence identity formation processes. Gender, Eccles argues, influences a person's anticipation of success and their subjective value placed on the behavior. The distinct social experiences of males and females orientates both groups to form "different hierarchies of core personal values; form different long-range goals and pleasure seeking activities; and form a definition of what activity should be integrated with the self."[88] In a longitudinal study, Eccles and her team found that young women showed more willingness than men to make vocational sacrifices for the family. Another study shows that women are more likely than men to engage in

[85] Susan Lutz Klauda, Stephen Tonks, and Allan Wigfield, "Expectancy-Value Theory," in Handbook of Motivation at School, ed. Kathryn R. Wentzel and David B. Miele, 2nd Editio (New York: Routledge, 2016), 58.
[86] Eccles and Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action" 83.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 85.

and develop competence in several activities simultaneously.[89] Essentially, these differences are the result of "gender-role socialization and self-socialization."[90]

Possible Selves

Besides providing intensive or extensive relationships; the psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness; and contributing to a person's subjective task value, a social environment provides possible selves that role players model themselves after or avoid being like. To that end, everyone imagines their future self, whether that self is rich or poor, thin, or obese, successful, or unsuccessful. This idea of imagining what one may become is conceptualized in possible selves theory. Possible selves are drawn from an individual's significant hopes, fears, fantasies, and threats.[91] Markus and Nurius examine possible selves as the link between the "self-concept and motivation."[92]Markus and Nurius posit, "These may be past selves that no longer characterize the self, but under some circumstances could be relevant again, or they may be future selves, images of the self that have not yet been realized but that are hoped for or feared."[93] In other words, people are motivated to act by contemplating on prominent representations of the self in the past and the future. Possible selves are not only personal, they are social in that people fantasize about becoming like others. These others emanate from a person's social environment, historical context, or media. Possible selves, whether from the present or the past, historical or cultural, dead or alive –motivates a person to behave in ways that congruent to the identity.

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[89] Ibid., 86.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius, "Possible Selves," *American Psychologist* 41, no. 9 (1986): 954–69, https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954. 954.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 957.

The self-concept is a system comprised of self-schemas. Self-schemas are highly complex structures of the self that determine which past memories will remain salient and how these memories are interpreted.[94] Markus and Nurius present the *working self-concept* as a "set of self-conceptions that are presently active in thought and memory."[95] The content accumulated by the working self-concept depends on day-to-day experiences. As a result of these experiences, one can gather an array of positive and negative self-conceptions that include the "good selves, bad selves, hoped-for selves, the feared selves, the not-me selves, the ideal selves, and the ought selves."[96]

Competence and Self-Efficacy

At some point in my research, I became confused about the difference between competence and self-efficacy. I found that, at present, scholars continue to debate the differences between competence and self-efficacy. A great majority of the scholars see competence as "the major common denominator" between self-concept and self-efficacy.[97] For Bandura, self-efficacy is the "foundation of human agency."[98] Bandura's explanation of self-efficacy highlights the involvement of cognitive processes. According to Bandura, "Those of high efficacy visualize success scenarios that provide positive guides for performance, whereas those beset by doubts about their efficacy visualized failure scenarios that undermine performance by dwelling on how things might go wrong."[99] In other words, a person's thought patterns can determine the effort

[94] Ibid., 955.
[95] Ibid., 957.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Mimi Bong and Einar M. Skaalvik, "Academic Self-Concept and Self-Efficacy: How Different Are They Really?" Educational Psychology Review 15, no. 1 (2003): 11.
[98] Albert Bandura, "Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Albert Bandura," Asian Journal of Social Psychology, no. 2 (1999): 28.
[99] Ibid., 29.

that they put into their performance. People are motivated to face and be successful at difficult tasks by first imagining and predicting their success before the task is complete.[100] This is also important when managing stress and anxiety. That is because people who believe they can cope with stress are less vulnerable to highly stressful activities.[101]

Bandura also presents four sources of self-efficacy beliefs that are helpful for this research:

- Enactive mastery experiences: Enactive mastery experiences imply that one needs to experience successfully overcoming a difficult task.[102] If tasks are always easy, a person will never learn how to overcome failure.[103]
- Vicarious experience: Vicarious experience means seeing others similar to you succeed at a task instills the belief that you too can be successful.[104]
- Verbal persuasion: Verbal persuasion is when self-efficacy arises from being persuaded into believing in one's capabilities to succeed and exerting greater effort.[105]
- Psychological and affective states: Psychological and affective states means a person's own judgment of their psychological and emotional state can diminish self-efficacy.[106]

[100] Ibid., 30.
[101] Ibid., 30.
[102] Albert Bandura, Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1997), 80.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 86.
[105] Ibid., 101.
[106] Ibid., 106.

Furthermore, people's attributions of fatigue and pains to their physical states can reduce feeling of self-efficacy. Reducing negative feeling and attributions can optimize self-efficacy.

Historical Overview of Religious Education in the Black American Muslim Context

Religious education in the Black American Muslim context can be traced back to the fifteenth century whence Africans were forcibly brought to the Americas and reduced to chattel. Providing a summation of this period, Rudulph T. Ware III posits:

> The Euro-American trade in African slaves, commonly (and euphemistically) called the Atlantic slave trade in spite of its Indian Ocean components, was the largest forced migration in human history. It carried roughly 15 million Africans away from the continent in European and American vessels from the 1440s to the 1880s and delivered those sturdy enough to survive the Middle Passage mainly to Atlantic ports of call. Senegambia was first visited by Portuguese slavers in the 1440s, and over four hundred years the trade produced profound social effects within the region's Muslim societies.[107]

Reflecting on this system of dehumanization, we find that plantation life proved to be hostile towards the Muslim ideal. Consequently, this group of enslaved African Muslims strove with meager resources to maintain a semblance of the religious upbringing they witnessed in their homelands—an upbringing that included memorizing portions or the entire Qur'an and learning Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history, and the Arabic language. The African Muslim community's early emphasis on religious instruction lays the foundation for the reformulation of a model of religious education in the Black American Muslim context, and therefore, pre-slavery Africa is an essential point of departure for this discussion.

Islamic Education Before Slavery

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[107] Rudolph T. Ware III, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014) Kindle Edition, Location 1892.

Before America's inhumane bondage, Islam spread throughout Africa mainly by way of "merchants, clerics, and rulers."[108] For instance, in some African societies, sub-Saharan African merchants began to convert to Islam after coming into contact with Berber and Arab traders.[109] In other societies, rulers converted to Islam, causing Islam to spread amongst the elite. Additionally, African societies witnessed charismatic clerics who gained influence through propagation campaigns. Whether a minority or a majority, Muslims were found throughout Africa co-existing with pagan religions. Seemingly, Islam's rudimentary characteristics were compatible with local African customs, which contributed to a smoother conversion experience.

To these ends, between the eighth and sixteenth centuries, Islamic Africa produced some of the most prominent kingdoms and luminaries known to the continent.[110] Proven to be the most useful sources for this history are three texts: *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, translated from Arabic into English by J.F.P. Hopkins and edited by Hopkins and Nehemia Levtzion; *The History of Islam in Africa,* edited by Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels; and *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa* translated and edited by Said Hamdun and Noel Q. King.

The *Corpus* includes an English translation of the writings from Abū 'Ubayd 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Bakrī, a celebrated Andalusian geographer, who offers details into Muslim life in three African kingdoms including Takrūr, Ghana, and Gao, all located in the *Bilād As-Sūdān* or the Lands of the Blacks. Interestingly, it seems that Al-Bakrī never left Spain but

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[108] Sylviane A. Diouf, Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas (New York: New York Press, 1998), 4.
[109] Michael A. Gomez Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 10.
[110] Rudolph T. Ware III, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014) Kindle Edition, Location 1974 of 8964.

instead encountered those who traveled to *Bilād As-Sūdān*.[111] Al-Bakrī highlights life in Takrūr under the Muslim ruler, Wārjābī b. Rābīs, who transitioned his land's inhabitants from paganism to Islam.[112] Prior to the conversion of Wārjābī the people of his land worshipped the pagan deity, *dakākīr*.

Conversely, in Ghana, King Tunkā Manīn was not Muslim but he was impartial, having had majority Muslim ministers in his cabinet and Muslim citizens enjoying freedom to practice the faith in his land. Al-Bakrī posits:

> The city of Ghāna consists of two towns situated on a plain. One of these towns, which is inhabited by Muslims, is large and possesses twelve mosques, in one of which they assemble for the Friday prayer. There are salaried imams and muezzins, as well as jurists and scholars.[113]

From Al-Bakrī's accounts, Islam appeared to be well established and making its way to the mainstream.

Considering Ghana's non-Muslim ruler, Al-Bakrī's reports indicated the ability of Muslims in Africa to exist alongside pagan religions. Presenting an example of this symbiotic relationship between Islam and paganism, Al-Bakrī discussed the allowances made by the king of Ghana for the Muslims who approached his throne. He mentions, "When the people who profess the same religion as the king approach him they fall on their knees and sprinkle dust on their heads, for this is their way of greeting him. As for the Muslims, they greet him only by

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[111] Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, *The History of Islam in Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 62.
[112] N. Levtizion and J.F.P Hopkins, *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000), 77.
[113] Ibid., 79.

clapping their hands."[114] This account corroborates Sylviane Diouf's assertion in which she states, "Africans themselves considered Islam an African religion."[115]

In addition, the *Corpus* mentions more accounts from another noted twelfth century geographer by the name of Ibn 'Abd Allāh Muhammad b. Abī Bakr al-Zuhrī. According to Al-Zuhrī, "When Hām son of Nūh settled in the West he begat the Sūdān. They are four tribes: the Nūba, the Habasha, the Zanj, and Janāwa."[116] In Janāwa, existed Ghana about which he claims converted to Islam in 1076 under Lamtūna. He further states about Ghana:

> Today they are Muslims and have scholars, lawyers, and Koran readers and have become pre-eminent in these fields. Some of their chief leaders have come to al-Andalus. They have travelled to Mecca and made the Pilgrimage and visited the Prophet's tomb and returned to their land to spend large sums on the Holy War.[117]

Besides Ghāna, he mentions the lands of Tādimakka, Wāraqlān, and Zāfūn as being amongst several lands that have also accepted Islam. Both accounts of Al-Bakrī and Al-Zuhrī show Islam as going beyond the status of fringe and embedding itself as an established religious tradition in Africa.

Yet, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muhammad *al-sharīf* al-Idrīsī was perhaps the most prominent Arab geographer known to Europe.[118] He is most famous for an abridgment of his work that was made available in Rome as early as 1592. Like both Al-Bakrī and Al-Zuhrī, al-Idrīsī never visited the Sūdān but instead relied on people who did for his reports. About Ghana, he posits that "This is the greatest of all the towns of the Sūdān in respect of area, the most populous, and

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[114] Ibid., 80.
[115] Sylviane A. Diouf, Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas (New York: New York Press, 1998), 4.
[116] N. Levtizion and J.F.P Hopkins, 94.
[117] Ibid., 98.
[118] Ibid., 104.

with the most extensive trade."[119] He confirms reports that the king and the people of Ghana were Muslims. Furthermore, he highlights the substantial wealth of Ghana's king, who owned a large gold nugget that set him apart from other kings in the Sūdān.

Following the works of Al-Bakrī, Al-Zuhrī, and Al-Idrīsī, Shihāb al-Dīn b. Fadl Allāh Al-'Umarī' was a 14th-century explorer from Damascus. His work is a primary source for the history of Malī in the fourteenth century. He relates that the king of Mālī, Sulaymān, "built ordinary and cathedral mosques and minarets, and established the Friday observances, and prayers in congregation, and the muezzin's call. He brought jurists of the Malikite school to his country and there continued as sultan of the Muslims and became a student of religious sciences."[120]

Additionally, his work is the main source for details about the life of the most famous of the Malian sultans, Mansa Mūsā. He sheds light on the Islamic pilgrimage performed by Mūsā and his entourage. He recounts:

> This sultan Mūsā, during his stay in Egypt both before and after his journey to the Noble Hijāz, maintained a uniform attitude of worship and turning towards God. It was as though he were standing before Him because of His continual presence in his mind. He and all those with him behaved in the same manner and were well-dressed, grave, and dignified. He was noble and generous and performed many acts of charity and kindness. He had left his country with 100 loads of gold which he spent during his Pilgrimage on the tribes who lay along his route from his country to Egypt, while he was in Egypt, and again from Egypt to the Noble Hijāz and back.[121]

The journey of Mansa Mūsā remains one of the most famous pilgrimages to Mecca in the history of Islam in Africa. Al-'Umarī also states about Mūsā journey, "Gold was at a high price in Egypt until they came in that year… This has been the state of affairs for about twelve years until this

[119] Ibid., 109.
[120] Ibid., 261.
[121] Ibid., 269.

day by reason of the large amount of gold which they brought into Egypt and spent there."[122] Thus, as a consequence of Mūsā's distribution of gold throughout Egypt, the price of gold in Egypt dropped, impacting the economy for several years.

A contemporary of Al-'Umari was the 14th-century renowned Moroccan traveler, Ibn Battūta. Unlike his three predecessors, ibn Battūta visited the lands in the Sudan. He arrived in Mali during the reign of Mansa Sulaiman, approximately three hundred years after Islam first arrived on the continent.[123] Furthermore, Ibn Battuta professed his admiration for several Islamic customs including their keenest on praying on time; attending the Friday prayer and wearing all white; and the children memorizing the Qur'ān by heart.[124] Illustrating their immense dedication to the Qur'ān Ibn Battūta recounts,

> I went in to visit the *qādi* on an 'Id day and his children were tied up. I said to him, "Why do you not release them?" He said, "I shall not do so until they learn the Qur'ān by heart." One day I passed by a handsome youth from them dressed in fine clothes and on his feet was a heavy chain. I said to the man who was with me, "What has this youth done –has he killed someone?" The youth heard my remark and laughed. It was told me, "He has been chained so that he will learn the Qur'an by heart."[125]

These accounts give clue to the climate of religious education and the Qur'ānic literacy that was promoted in the Sudan.

By reviewing the written accounts of Al-Bakrī, Al-Zuhrī, Al-Idrīsī, Al-'Umari, and Ibn Battūta we find that Islam alongside paganism, became a well-established faith tradition in the Sūdān. Muslims were found throughout the Sūdān memorizing the Quran by heart, performing prayers, adhering to Islamic dietary laws, and performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is critical

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Said Hamdun and Noel King, *Ibn Battuta: In Black Africa* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1975), 44.
[124] Ibid., 58.
[125] Ibid., 59.

for Islamic studies teachers to include this history in their curricula. This history fosters a sense of self, competence, and cultural and religious pride. More importantly, African American Muslim adolescence males must know that their history did not began with slavery. Therefore, this dissertation argues that a religious education model that develops the religio-racial identity of African American Muslim adolescent males must include these historical accounts of the great African empires. We now examine the literature that explains how Africa's emphasis on religious education directly impacted plantation life for African Muslims enslaved in the Americas.

Religious Education During Slavery

Many African Muslim slaves brought to the Americas were captured from lands in which Islam was well established. Growing up in Africa meant that they memorized portions of or the entire Qur'an; they learned Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history, and the Arabic language. A few authors examining this topic, including Sylviane A. Diouf, Allan D. Austin, and Michael A. Gomez, highlighted literacy as being a key feature of the enslaved African Muslim community. Diouf posits,

> A large proportion of the Muslims arrived in the New World already literate, reading and writing Arabic and their own languages transcribed in the Arabic alphabet. As other Africans came from exclusively oral cultures, and as learning to read and write was either illegal or actively discouraged for all slaves in the Americas, literacy became one of the most distinguishing marks of the Muslims.[126]

[126] Sylviane A. Diouf, Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas (New York: New York Press, 1998), 4.

Gomez further asserts that "The belief in the superiority of the 'Muhammedans' was a consistently held view throughout the colonial and antebellum periods."[127] For instance, enslaved African Muslims such as Salih Bilali were praise for their intellectual acumen.[128]

Furthermore, all three authors discuss the efforts by white Americans to "de-Africanize" enslaved African Muslims by drawing a partition between their literacy and their African origin.[129] That is to say, some of the white Americans would refer to African Muslims as Moors or Arabs, overlooking their African identity. Diouf presents an example of this in the life of Abd al Rahmān Ibrahīma, nicknamed "prince" because of his royal status back in his homeland of Timbo. One journalist went out of her way to present Ibrahīma as a Moor saying:

> Prince is a Moor. Of this, however, his present appearance suggests a doubt. The objection is that "he is too dark for a Moor and his hair is short and curly." It is true such is his present appearance; but it was materially different on his arrival in this country. His hair was at that time soft and very long, to a degree that precludes the possibility of his being a negro. His complexion, too, has undergone a change. Although modern physiology does not allow color to be a necessary effect of climate, still one fact is certain that constant exposure to a vertical sun for many years, together with the privations incident to the lower order of community, and an inattention to cleanliness, will produce a very material change in the complexion.[130]

Others, such as Omar ibn Said, known for writing his autobiography in Arabic (essentially known for his literacy) was presented as an Arab by journalists who were well aware of the implications of him being an intelligent African. Associating African identity with traits such as intelligence and outstanding would essentially topple the myth that justified slavery in the first

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[127] Michael A. Gomez, Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 173.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Allan D. Austin, African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles (New York: Routledge, 1997), 25.
[130] Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York: New York Press, 1998), 98.

place. From this discussion, we learn that identity negotiation has always been at the root of African American social issues in America.

The Consequences of Education on the Plantation

Considering the educational rigor from which many enslaved African Muslims came, they were best suited to be plantation managers and domestic workers. For instance, while enslaved in Jamaica, Abu Bakr al Siddiq's owner had him keep his property's records in the Arabic language.[131] Abu Bakr used his literary acumen to compose his autobiography. Additionally, Bilāli Muhammad of Sapelo Island, also known as the old man, was captured and brought to the Americas from Guinea. He was given the role of plantation manager supervising up to 1000 slaves.[132] He is most known for his surviving literary work that includes an excerpt of the Māliki legal text called the *Risāla* of Ibn Abī Zayd.[133] Yet, not far from Bilali, on St. Simon island, was the home of another enslaved Muslim named Salih Bilali.[134] Bilali was born around 1765, raised in Maasina, Mali, captured in 1790, and eventually sold and transported to Hopeton plantation on St. Simons.[135] Bilāli gained prominence on the plantation and given charge over the entire plantation "months at a time."[136] Furthermore, he was known for his devotion to the extent that his master called him "the most religious man that he had ever known."[137]

The cases of Abu Bakr Assidiq, Bilali Muhammad, and Sālih Bilāli did not reflect the status quo. The threat to white hegemonic authority and the myth of African intellectual

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[131] Ibid., 108.
[132] Allan D. Austin, African Muslims in Antebellum America: Transatlantic Stories and Spiritual Struggles (New York: Routledge, 1997), 6.
[133] Michael A. Gomez Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 155.
[134] Allan D. Austin, 85.
[135] Michael A. Gomez, 154.
[136] Ibid.,154.
[137] Ibid., 176.

inferiority resulted in many slaveholders disapproving of and actively impeding the literacy of enslaved African Muslims.

Besides enjoying upward mobility on the plantation, coming from this type of educational tradition meant that Muslims remained challenged by the idea of being enslaved by the white man. Hence, while some used their literacy to propel them up the social hierarchy of the plantation others found utility in designing elaborate slave rebellions. To this end, Joao Jose Reis, author of *The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia*, observes that amongst other things, Islam was an instrument of revolt.[138]

According to Diouf, leading resisters in the Haitian Revolution, for instance, were Muslim maroons. The most famous of this enslaved group was Francois Macandal, a Guinea-born, most likely Mandingo, Muslim who may have been a *sharif* or a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad.[139] Perhaps, due to early instruction in Islamic studies, Macandal possessed a strong command of the Arabic language.[140] He taught slaves how to make a poison, which they administered to their owners or against other slaves. He was also skilled in amulet making, which slaves wore for spiritual protection.[141] In one instance, Macandal "planned to poison the wells of the city of Cap-Francais."[142] This plot was thwarted when a slave revealed his aspirations to authorities resulting in Macandal being burned at the stake.[143] Nevertheless, the resistance of Macandal and others eventually led to the independence of Haiti.

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[138] Joao Jase Reis, *The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 96.
[139] Sylviane A. Diouf, 150.
[140] Ibid., 151.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., 152.

Another prominent rebellion took place in Bahia, Brazil. In Bahia, enslaved Muslims were known as *Males*, which many believed to be derived from the Yoruba term for Muslim.[144] The Muslim community of Bahia, according to Reis, was made up of Hausas, Yorubas, and Tapas. Dissatisfied with their plight, they rebelled against their authorities in the Bahia revolt of 1835. Wooden slates discovered in several homes of the enslaved along with papers that contained Arabic writing, indicate the Africans' successful attempts at continuing the practice of the religious education of their homelands.[145] This discovery corresponds to the chief of police's statement that affirmed that many of them knew how to read and write in a script that looked like Arabic.[146] Like Muslims in Haiti, enslaved Muslims wore amulets made up of pieces of paper containing passages from the Qur'an and earnest supplications to God.

Nevertheless, the examples of enslaved African Muslims struggling to preserve their religious education are seen throughout this horrid period of slavery.[147] Muslim names were found in slaveholder ledgers and in newspaper advertisements of runaway slaves; interviews with former slaves and Muslims' descendants were recorded, documents written in the Arabic language were preserved, and other evidences indicate that Muslims were highly literate and their numbers reached well into the thousands.[148] What is also indicated is that some of these early African Muslims unapologetically observed their faith tenets including the Muslim prayer in the open on the plantation. Additionally, they secured religious paraphernalia and copies of the Qur'ān in the Arabic language.[149] The value they placed upon religious education, including the

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[144] Joao Jase Reis, 96.
[145] Sylviane A. Diouf, 118.
[146] Joao Jase Reis, 97.
[147] Michael A. Gomez, 143.
[148] Ibid., 144.
[149] Ibid., 143.

Qur'ān and the Arabic language, can surely be posited into a reformulation of religious education in the Black American Muslim context and a new identity development model.

Pan Africanism and Islam

In the nineteenth century, post-emancipation, scholars began to link Africa with Black America in hopes of producing self-esteem for a downtrodden people. At the helm of these discourses were two Pan-Africanists—one being Sudanese-Egyptian, Duse Muhammad Ali, and the other a West Indian scholar named Edward Wilmot Blyden. For information about the life of Blyden, I referred mainly to Hollis R. Lynch's text titled, *Edward Wilmot Blyden Pan-Negro Patriot*. Edward Blyden, an educator, theologian, politician, statesman, diplomat, and explorer, was one of the foremost pioneers of the nineteenth century Pan African movement. Due to America's discriminatory policies and antagonistic treatment of free Black people, Blyden and others began to entertain the idea of migrating to a new land. Thus, in 1851, Blyden arrived in Liberia, seeking a land in which Black people can flourish.[150] In a stirring plea urging Black people in America to migrate to Liberia, Blyden contends:

> We should not content ourselves living among other races, simply by their permission or their endurance… We must build up negro states; we must establish and maintain the various institutions; we must make and administer laws, erect and preserve churches… we must have governments; we must have legislation of our own: we must build ships and navigate them; we must ply the trades, instruct the schools, control the press and thus aid in shaping mankind. Nationality is an ordinance of Nature. The heart of every true Negro yearns after a distinct and separate nationality.[151]

Lynch notes that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation gave Black American leadership reasons not to support Blyden's idea to migrate.[152] In other words, the Black American aspirations of

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[150] Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 30.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

bringing slavery to an end and acceptance as American citizens deterred black people from heeding the calls of Blyden and other emigrationists.

Nevertheless, Blyden eventually rose to become the Secretary of State in Liberia. As the Secretary of State, he continued his call for a mass exodus and warned Black Americans that the praise they received for their participation in the American civil war would be short-lived. In addition, he found time to involve himself in the brewing feud in Liberia between the black educated class and the mulatto ruling class.[153] His stance against the mulattoes led to their efforts to dissuade West Indians from migrating to Liberia.

Furthermore, as Secretary of State, Blyden endeavored to bring Liberia closer to Muslim majority nations. He traveled to countries in the middle east and endeavored to learn the Arabic language. Lynch explained:

> Blyden remained anxious that Liberia should have regular intercourse with the Mohammedan states of the interior with the aim eventually of incorporating them into the Negro Republic. To facilitate this, he decided to learn Arabic and teach it to students at Liberia College whom he hoped would act as emissaries to the Mohammedan chiefs of the interior. On 11 May 1886, he left Liberia for Lebanon, and spent three months at the Syrian Protestant College furthering his study of Arabic.[154]

Blyden's travels throughout Islamic Africa and exposure to Arabic manuscripts left a lasting impression on him and broadened his discourse on Pan-Africanism. Subsequently, this exposure to Islam led to Blyden's most controversial work yet. He began to speak about Christianity as a tradition that demeaned Black people while Islam led to Black advancement.[155]

Blyden's extensive fieldwork culminated in his collection of essays entitled "Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race." Speaking about this text, Turner asserts:

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[153] Ibid., 38.
[154] Ibid., 47.
[155] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 47.

> Blyden went on to show in this volume that Christianity, in spite of its eastern origins, had become an exclusively European religion that debased African Americans and taught them to deny their own racial heritage.[156]

In his own words, Blyden asserts, "Everywhere in Christian lands he (Black people) plays, at the present moment, the part of the slave, ape or puppet."[157]

Conversely, Blyden sang praises for Islam and the positive impact the tradition has had on the "Negro race." He highlights the stark contrast between pagan and Islamic Africa. Blyden posits, "When we left a Pagan and entered a Mohammedan community, we at once noticed that we had entered a moral atmosphere widely separated from, and loftier far than, the one we had left. We discovered that the character, feelings, and conditions of the people were profoundly altered and improved."[158] Further, he mentioned biographies of great West African Muslim leaders and showed admiration for Muslim communities because of their self-reliance and their emphasis on pursuing education.

Another renowned pan-Africanist, Duse Muhammad Ali, was born in 1866 in Alexandria, Egypt to an Egyptian father and Sudanese mother.[159] Kambiz Ghanea-Bassiri, is his text titled *A History of Islam in America,* and Richard Brent Turner's *Islam in the African-American Experience,* offer biographical details from the life of Ali that are essential for this study. At the age of nine Ali was sent to England where he received the bulk of his education. In 1912, he began to distribute his ideas throughout the world via his journal, *The African Times*

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[156] Ibid., 52.
[157] Edward W. Blyden, *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1994), 16.
[158] Ibid., 7.
[159] Kambiz Ghanea-Bassiri, *A History of Islam in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 204.

and Orient Review. It was published from 1912 to 1920.[160] According to Turner, the journal contained, "book reviews, African and Asian advertisements, and many articles on Islam in the British Empire."[161] Additionally, Duse was heavily involved in the Ahmadiyya mission in Britain and the United States. He capitalized on Islam's reputation as being the antithesis to Western hegemony. Moreover, he sought to unify "Pan-Africanist and Pan-Islamic discourses in America, Europe, Africa, and Asia."[162]

Duse is most known for being an associate and mentor of the prominent Pan-Africanist, Marcus Garvey, who would later form the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey moved to London in 1912 when he came in contact with Duse. He became Duse's employee, working for the journal in 1913.[163] In the company of Ali, Garvey learned much about Islamic principles and African history and politics. Garvey's UNIA drew much of its influence from Ali's Pan-African ideology.

Ironically, as Garvey's movement began to spread, Duse began working for Garvey as the head of the African Affairs department.[164] He also, contributed regularly to the UNIA journal called *The Negro World* and he frequently met with Black American leaders on behalf of Garvey. According to Ghanea-Bassiri, Duse may have introduced the prominent Ahmadiyya missionary, Muhammad Sadiq, to Garveyites in Chicago in 1922.[165] Thereafter, Sadiq began to propagate to UNIA members resulting in a number of converts to Islam. Ghanea-Bassiri and Turner suggests that after finding success with the UNIA, Sadiq "adopted a more nationalist tone

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[160] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 83.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Kambiz Ghanea-Bassiri, 204.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., 207.

in presenting Islam as a solution to America's 'race problem.'" Seemingly, Duse was interested in merging black nationalism with Islam.

Nevertheless, Blyden and Duse championed the cause for black advancement, and their impactful discourses influenced both black nationalists and Islamic movements in America in the twentieth century. They both felt that Islam presented a better lifestyle for those of African descent, while Christianity debased the African people. Moreover, Islam is suitable in addressing the race problem in America. Their biographies and Pan-African ideas can be posited towards a model of religious education in the Black American Muslim context.

Noble Drew Ali and the First Islamic Movement

In 1913, a decade after Blyden's death, Noble Drew Ali became the founder of the first Black Islamic sect in America. What began as the Canaanite Temple eventually became the Moorish Science Temple of America. Ali appropriated ideas and symbols about Islam from the black Freemason movement.[166] His objective was to construct a new Black American cultural and political identity that involved changes in name, nationality, religion, diet, and dress.[167]

Ali's advent was during a time of immense social challenges in the Black American community. From 1915 to 1930, southern Black Americans migrated to the northern and midwestern industrial cities searching for relief from institutionalized southern racism and better financial opportunities. However, beneath these opportunities lay racial agendas and exploitation. Nevertheless, the social climate set by the "Great Migration" resulted in the growth of new urban religious and political movements. Ali's movement grew to an estimated membership of 30,000, and he established temples around America in urban centers such as

[166] Ibid., 72.
[167] Ibid.

Detroit, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Lansing, Cleveland, Baltimore, and more.[168] His followers wore black fezzes and white turbans,[169] carrying nationality cards in which they claimed to be olive-skinned Asiatic people who were the descendants of Moroccans or Moors.[170] In addition, their sacred text was the Holy Koran, also called Circle Seven Koran, written by Ali in 1927.[171]

In 1929, after factional division and organization dissidence, Ali's reign came to an end. According to Turner, Ali was arrested and jailed in the murder of Sheikh Claude Greene, Ali's opponent for leadership. Several weeks later, Ali was released and died shortly after.

Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam

After the unraveling of the main black movements including Garvey's UNIA, and Ali's Moorish Science Temple, there was a void of dynamic leaders and organizations addressing issues relevant to the black community. The climate was ripe and ready to receive the Pan-African ideas of the Nation of Islam (NOI). Thus, in 1930, Fard Muhammad, a street peddler, began teaching his version of Islam in a Black American community in Detroit known as Paradise Valley.[172] Ironically, Fard Muhammad was non-black with some claiming him to be of Arab or Indian origin. Nonetheless, he was able to attract eight thousand followers in Detroit.[173] According to Kambiz Ghanea-Bassiri,

> Fard initiated a parochial school called the University of Islam, a training group to teach women to be "proper" wives and mothers called the Muslim Girls Training and General

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[168] Ibid., 92.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 93.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Herbert Berg, *Elijah Muhammad and Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), Kindle edition Chapter 2.

> Civilization Classes (MGT and GCC), and an unarmed security force comprised of men called the Fruit of Islam (FOI).[174]

Fard set up a movement that addressed the needs of the disenfranchised people in urban Detroit. He taught that black people were divine, whilst white people were "blond blue-eyed devils."[175] He was extremely effective at challenging the ideas of black inferiority and white supremacy. His black audience was intrigued by the courage he displayed in openly calling white people devils. One audience member in particular, named Elijah Poole, was especially captivated by Fard's message and, after attending several meetings, became convinced that Fard had a program to save the Black American people.

For Elijah, the ideas of Fard were easy to accept, perhaps because he grew up in the Jim Crow South and was an eyewitness to two lynchings. He migrated from the South into the North and was greeted by racial discrimination and white supremacy. His experiences with white America made him susceptible to a message of black separatism. Eventually, Elijah rose to become Fard's most enthusiastic student minister. And so, in August of 1934, after three and a half years under his tutelage, Fard chose Elijah to be Supreme Minister of the Nation of Islam.[176] Before departing the NOI, Fard changed Elijah's last name to Muhammad, after his own last name.[177] He then mysteriously disappeared, never to return.

Certainly, Elijah Muhammad's theology deviated from the teachings of mainstream *Sunni* Islam. He taught that Wallace D. Fard was the incarnation of God on Earth. Additionally,

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[174] Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 224.
[175] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 157.
[176] Herbert Berg, *Elijah Muhammad and Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), Kindle edition Chapter 2.
[177] Ibid.

Elijah taught his followers mythological stories surrounding the origins of black and white people. According to Elijah, black people were the first human beings on earth. God created the black man to look like himself and in that sense, the Black man is the creator and the created.[178] Edward Curtis further explains,

> After a series of cataclysmic galactic events that occurred trillions of years ago, which included the separation of the moon from the earth, blacks came to inhabit the holy city of Mecca in Arabia. According to Elijah Muhammad, they were called the tribe of Shabazz. They spoke Arabic, practiced the religion of Islam, and lived in an Edenic civilization that continued for epochs – until around 4600 B.C.[179]

Furthermore, Black people in America are the lost and found members of the tribe of Shabazz. To highlight the doctrine of Black superiority, Elijah taught that a mad scientist named Yacub conducted a series of experiments that produced the evil and inferior white man.[180] The uncivilized white man ate raw meat and dwelled in the caves of Europe from 2000 to 4000 B.C.E.[181] Because of their evil nature, white people enslaved Black people and brought them to America.

Elijah's theology was concerned with the entire person, highlighting the interconnection with their body and their behavior. In his acclaimed text titled *How to Eat to Live*, Elijah wrote,

> Eating the proper food that has been given to us and taught to us by our Lord and Saviour, Master Fard Muhammad, changes us in many ways. Not only does it give us good health, but it gives us a better way of thinking, as food and our mental power work in the same way. Whatever affects one affects the other.[182]

Elijah taught his followers which foods were harmful and which foods promoted physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. For example, he told his followers to stay away from vegetables

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[178] Edward E. Curtis, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Kindle edition Chapter 2.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Elijah Muhammad, *How to Eat to Live* (Secretarius MEMPS Publication, 1967), 31.

such as collard greens, turnip leaves, and kale. Additionally, he warned against the consumption of white potatoes, sweet potatoes, rice, and white biscuits. Regarding beans, he prohibited black-eyed peas, field peas, speckled peas, red peas, brown peas, and split peas. Furthermore, he placed great emphasis on eating one meal saying:

> Eat a single meal a day, no matter what anyone says. If your doctor says that you should eat more than one meal a day, ignore him with a smile, and eat only once a day. If he tells you he eats three meals a day, tell him that his length of life is about the same as his patients. Then, tell the doctor to try eating one meal a day.[183]

Adherers to this segment of Elijah's theology reaped the benefits of an improved self-concept.

Elijah's economic plan was perhaps the reason that the NOI was able to accomplish what other movements could not. Incredibly, under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, the NOI was most certainly a legitimate organization, worth an estimated $85,000,000.[184] Thus, Elijah Muhammad was not only a great leader but an accomplished businessman. At its peak, under Elijah Muhammad, the NOI owned the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, thousands of acres of farmland, the *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper, housing complexes, an aircraft, and retail and wholesale businesses. Thus, his greatest achievement was the establishment of an independent Black American economy.

Elijah Muhammad passed away on February 25, 1975 of congestive heart failure.[185] The unexpected news of his death sent shockwaves throughout his flock of loyal followers, many of whom refused to believe that the "messenger" was dead. Coincidently, the following day was Saviors' Day, a yearly holiday and celebration commemorating the birth of Nation of Islam

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[183] Ibid.
[184] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 224.
[185] C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994), 264.

mastermind, Fard Muhammad. In front of some twenty thousand Nation of Islam members, the announcement was made confirming the death of Elijah Muhammad, followed by the announcement of a new supreme minister –Wallace D. Muhammad, the seventh son of Elijah Muhammad.[186]

Imam W.D. Muhammad

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad was born on October 30, 1933, to Clara and Elijah Poole Muhammad of Detroit, Michigan. Interestingly, at birth, he was named Wallace Delaney Muhammad, a name taken after the NOI founder, Wallace D. Fard. As a child, he was constantly reminded of his being named after the "savior," and that his future role was to help further spread the doctrine of the presumably God-incarnate, Wallace D. Fard, and his father, the so-called messenger of God. As time went on, he found himself conflicted about his father's theological beliefs and the direction of the NOI.

Doubts about his father's theology began early on in W.D. Muhammad's life. Surprisingly, his orthodox views were born within the NOI's vacuum. He received his early education at the NOI's elementary and secondary school called, the University of Islam.[187] The University of Islam offered standard subjects along with religious education and the Arabic language.[188] Elijah Muhammad hired a few native Arabic speaking teachers to teach the students classical Arabic. Thus, as a young boy, W.D. Muhammad studied Arabic with a Palestinian named Ibrahim, an Egyptian named Kamil and finally another Palestinian named Jamil Diab. Diab also taught his students some basic concepts from the Qur'an. By W.D. Muhammad's own

[186] Edward E. Curtis, Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 113.
[187] Edward E. Curtis, 109.
[188] Ibid.

admission, this early exposure to Qur'anic Arabic paved the way for his theological metamorphosis from the NOI to mainstream Islam.[189] Ironically, Diab later became an open opponent of Elijah Muhammad's philosophy. In fact, he went on to lead a movement to discredit Elijah Muhammad.[190]

In an interview with Umar Jamil Nasser in March 2008, W.D. Muhammad mentioned an event that he would later see as a spiritual catalyst for his doubt in the NOI doctrine. He explained that on a Wednesday night at the age of 12 or 13, he was left home alone while his parents went to the temple.[191] Suddenly, he became sleepy but was frightened after hearing several noises in his house.[192] His fear led him to raise his hands and invoke God, pronouncing the following invocation: "Oh Allah, if I'm not seeing you correctly, will you please help me see you correctly."[193] His denouncement of Wallace D. Fard as God incarnate is presumed to be the divinely inspired answer to this invocation.

Furthermore, in this same interview, he mentioned that he did not have to travel far in order to quench his thirst for Islamic orthodoxy. For example, while living with his family in their Chicago home, he would frequent his father's private library, which was right across from his bedroom.[194] He had access to Islamic literature from *Sunni* Islam as well as the *Ahmadiyyah* sect.[195] He read about the tenets of Islam and the life of Prophet Muhammad. One book that seemed to stand out was called *God, Man, and the Universe* written by Muslim philosopher and

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[189] Warith D. Muhammad, interview with Umar Jamil Nasser, March 14, 2008
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.

poet, Muhammad Iqbal.[196] This information seemed more compatible with his logical reasoning than the NOI teachings. However, at this time, he was not aware that this exposure would eventually take him away from the NOI theology.

W.D. Muhammad slowly rose through the ranks beginning his career as an assistant minister in the Chicago Temple.[197] In 1958, W.D. Muhammad became the minister of the NOI temple in Philadelphia.[198] He taught the members directly from the Qur'an, which was unusual, being that NOI members were discouraged from reading the Qur'an. Oddly, most of the ministers taught lessons using the Bible. His focus on the Qur'an also led him to teach his members the Arabic language. Members noticed that he didn't quote Wallace D. Fard as much and he refrained from calling white people devils.[199] Although his lessons were different, he was careful not to directly contradict his father's teachings. Nevertheless, his Qur'anic teachings earned him distinction, as rumors began to spread that he would be the one who would succeed his father. Unfortunately, in April 1960, after several years of legal battles, his upward momentum was interrupted when he was sentenced to prison for three years for draft evasion.[200]

On October 31, 1961, W.D. Muhammad reported to the Sandstone Correctional Institution in Minnesota in order to serve out his sentence.[201] His time in prison wasn't exactly a disaster; rather, it was paramount to his spiritual growth and development. While in prison, he was also able to study the Bible and Qur'an more extensively than before.[202] This afforded him the opportunity to review the NOI beliefs alongside the religious text. He felt that the NOI

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[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Edward E. Curtis, 109.
[199] Ibid., 109.
[200] Ibid., 110.
[201] Edward E. Curtis, 110.
[202] Ibid.

theology contradicted his rational thinking. Believing that the white-skinned Wallace D. Fard was God-incarnated is similar to the Christians' approach towards a white-skinned Jesus. Still the NOI would sharply condemn the Christians for their beliefs. Consequently, Wallace D. Fard as God incarnate was no longer intellectually appealing. Thus, while in prison, he made up his mind that when he was to be released, he would never again return to the belief that Mr. Wallace D. Fard was God incarnate.[203]

W.D. Muhammad was paroled on January 10, 1963.[204] He returned to the NOI ranks, this time with a new theological perspective. Other NOI members noticed that he was talking differently than the other ministers. He became extremely open about his views that Wallace D. Fard was not God. His nephew, Hasan Muhammad Sharif, recalls a conversation in which W.D. Muhammad exclaimed, "If Fard was standing here right now in front of me, I would grab him in his collar and snatch him out of his shoes."[205] Eventually, the word of his disbelief in the NOI's doctrine got back to his father, and thus he was summoned to the NOI court where he was charged with disbelieving that Wallace D. Fard was God.[206] As a result, he was excommunicated from the NOI and was not allowed to talk to other NOI members, including his own mother.

While away from the NOI, W.D. Muhammad had to endure some harassment by NOI members. According to Assistant Professor of Religion at Trinity University, Edward E. Curtis, "Like Malcolm, Wallace feared that he might be murdered, and on August 4, 1964, he went to the FBI and the local police hoping to obtain some protection from what he described as the

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[203] Warith D. Muhammad, interview with Umar Jamil Nasser, March 14, 2008
[204] Edward E. Curtis, 110.
[205] Lost Found, The African American's Journey to Al-Islam, dir. Shareef Nasir (Mizan Studios, 2010).
[206] Warith D. Muhammad, interview with Umar Jamil Nasser, March 14, 2008

"punch-your-teeth-out" squads in the NOI."[207] Surprisingly, Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965. Perhaps, feeling pressure and knowing the capabilities of the NOI, he rejoined the NOI five days later at the annual Savior's Day gathering in Chicago. Curtis asserts, "From 1965 until 1971, Wallace was expelled from the movement at least twice and perhaps as many as three to four times."[208]

Nevertheless, W.D. Muhammad garnered enough support to secure his position as supreme minister of the NOI. Although his father didn't announce it publicly, other NOI members including W.D. Muhammad claimed that on several occasions his father indicated that W.D. Muhammad would succeed him. In fact, before his father's death, W.D. Muhammad toured the country visiting different mosques. On February 25, 1975 W.D. Muhammad became the new supreme leader of the Nation of Islam.[209]

As new supreme minister, W.D. Muhammad accomplished an incredible theological reform in virtually a short period of time. In less than a decade, he successfully transformed the Nation of Islam from Islamic heterodox, based in black theology, into Islamic orthodox, based in a message of universalism. He changed the NOI terminology into that of Sunni nomenclature. For instance, instead of being called a "supreme minister" he accepted the orthodox Islamic title of *imam*. Temples were converted to "masjids" (Arabic for mosque). American patriotism was promoted and white people were no longer blanketed as devils. Several of the Nation of Islam's foundational beliefs, including Yacub's theory, Elijah Muhammad's messengership, and Wallace D. Fard's divinity, were all retired as myths.

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[207] Edward E. Curtis, 111.
[208] Ibid., 112.
[209] Lost Found, The African American's Journey to Al-Islam (DVD).

Moreover, W.D. Muhammad rejected cultural Islam and preached a philosophy of Americanism. In a surprising and, to some, disappointing decision, Imam Muhammad placed an American flag on the front of the NOI newspapers.[210] He told his followers to salute the American flag and the children attending the schools in his association began reciting the pledge of allegiance every morning.[211] He allowed those of his association to participate in the system by voting and participating in the political process. He even allowed his members to join the United States military. According to the late historian, Dr. C. Eric Lincoln,

> In the old Nation of Islam, both Wallace and his father Elijah went to prison for refusal of military service, but on February 5, 1992, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad was invited to the Pentagon to address the elite of the American military. The very next day on the floor of the United States Senate, Imam Muhammad invoked Allah, "the merciful Benefactor, the Merciful Redeemer" on behalf of "the President of the United States… every member of the Senate… every member of the House of Representatives." The wheel had turned. The Nation of Islam had almost come full circle.[212]

Furthermore, he was the first Muslim to deliver the invocation opening the United States Senate. His new message of Americanism was a direct contradiction to the teachings of his father.

A few practical lessons that can be posited in a model of religious education for the Black American Muslim context include his contributions to American interfaith relations. W.D. Muhammad was one of the pioneer leaders of interfaith dialogue before it was popularized as a result of the tragic events of 9/11. Thus, without compromising Islamic principles, Muslims must continue to build these alliances with other faith groups. These alliances must go beyond dialogue and move towards project-based initiatives benefiting the communities.

Second, W.D. Muhammad taught a message of Americanism. For those who choose to settle in America, participation in America becomes necessary. The unfortunate unraveling of

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[210] Edward E. Curtis, 116.
[211] Ibid.
[212] C. Eric Lincoln, 265.

communities who elected to isolate themselves, often resulted in uneducated and socially deficient community members; a failure to build institutions; and an overall inability to effect the status quo. As communities move into the future they must think in terms of civic engagement and training individuals who can represent the Muslim community in various American social spheres including the political sector. The Muslim community, both the immigrant and the indigenous, can learn from his attempts to balance his social philosophy of Americanism and his message of black particularism. As immigrants settle in America from other nations, they must realize that maintaining a connection to the culture from whence one came is not against Islam. At the same time, Muslims who are indigenous to America do not have to adopt another culture to be considered an authentic Muslim. W.D. Muhammad showed that Islam does not call for one to abandon their cultural identity.

Sunni Religio-Racial Movements

Another impactful Black American Muslim group was the Dar ul Islam Movement, which was established in Brooklyn, New York in 1962 by Rajab Mahmoud and Yahya Abdul-Kareem – and flourished until its dissolution in 1983.[213] Unlike the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam, the Dar, as they were mostly referred to as, claimed adherence to the orthodox teachings of Islam from the Qur'an and *sunnah* of Muhammad. Most of its members transitioned into Islam from the Black power movement.[214] Membership was achieved by giving *bai'ah* or signing a pledge of allegiance to the Dar ul Islam movement. Furthermore, the Dar was known for its literal application of the Qur'an and the *hadith.* The men wore cultural robes and turbans while the women usually wore full face-covering *hijabs*. Also, both men and

[213] Richard Brent Turner, 233.
[214] Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 70.

women members learned Qur'anic recitation and practiced martial arts. Mentioning the Dar's accomplishments, former member Mahmoud Ibrahim asserts,

> The Dar Movement went on to establish a daycare center, grade school, incense factory, girl-scouts and boy-scouts, the Movement publication, the first halal meat store, an annual inter-communal sporting event known as the Riyaadah and a Muslim prison chaplain component that still services the New York State prison system.[215]

At its height, the Dar was represented in 44 American cities, solidifying its position as one of the most influential indigenous American Muslim movements.[216]

After 21 years, the movement dissolved and split into a few splinter groups. According to McCloud, "In the late 1970s, an Indian Muslim by the name of Shaykh Jalani entered the Dar movement and convinced two of its founders and a significant number of members to form a community called the *Fuqra*."[217] Most of those who didn't follow Shaykh Jalani joined the community under the leadership of the former Black Panther minister of justice, Jamil al-Amin.

Black American Salafism

Yet, another movement that found its way into the predominately Black American urban communities is the *Salafi* movement. Adherents of this movement call themselves *Salafis* indicating their attempts to mimic Islamic practices of the *Salaf* or predecessors from the first three generations of Muslims. They are highly influenced by Saudi Arabia and the fundamentalist ideology of the founder of *Wahhabism*, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Moreover, their main objectives are to rid Islam of *shirk* or polytheism, revive *tauhid* or the singularity of God, and reject *bid'a* or new religious practices introduced after Muhammad.

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[215] Mahmoud Andrade Ibrahim Al Amreeki, *The Dar Ul Islam Movement: An American Odyssey Revisited* (An American Odyssey, 2010), XV.
[216] Ibid., 39.
[217] Aminah Beverly McCloud, 72.

With the immense wealth earned from oil, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was able to export this brand of Islam in the United States through books, Qur'anic translations, scholarships, and more. Moreover, in the late 1980s, a few Black Americans who received scholarships, graduated from or attended Medina University. They returned to America in order to spread the ideology to their urban communities. After heavy propagation through the distribution of lectures and literature, things began to flourish with new converts around the early 1990s. They were able to gain converts from the followers of Imam Warith D. Muhammad and Imam Jamil Al-Amin's community. Consequently, by the late 1990s, the Salafi movement had spread to almost every major city in America. Cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and East Orange, New Jersey enjoyed the largest number of Black American *Salafis*.[218]

Less prominent Black American Sunni Movements that provided Islamic education included the Hanafi Madhhab Movement led by Abdul Khaalis, the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood founded by Shaykh Khalid Ahmad Tawfiq, and the Islamic Party founded by Muzzafruddin. Due to the limited scope of this project I have decided not to elaborate on the legacy left by these group. Nevertheless, their impact continues to be felt till this day.

Adolescence Identity Development

Contemporary discussions surrounding adolescence identity date back to the works of Erickson and Marcia. Erickson recognized adolescence as a primal time in which the search for identity becomes critical. Building off of the works of Erickson, Marcia saw identity *crisis* as "the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives."[219] He

[218] Umar Lee, The Rise and Fall of the Salafi Dawah in the United States (St. Louis: St. Louis Stranger, 2014).
[219] James E. Marcia, "Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 3, no. 5 (1966): 551.

introduced eight stages of development that span throughout a person's lifetime, including: (1) *Trust vs. Mistrust*, (2) *Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt*, (3) *Initiative vs. Guilt*, (4) *Industry vs. Inferiority*, (5) *Identity vs. Role Confusion*, (6) *Intimacy vs. Isolation*, (7) *Generativity vs. Stagnation*, and (8) *Integrity vs. Despair*. At each stage, the person experiences a *crisis* or a decisive moment in which one must choose between meaningful directions, either positive or negative, and arrive at a point of distinction.[220]

Conversely, *commitment*, according to Marcia, is concerned with the level of "investment the individual exhibits."[221] In addition, Marcia presented four identity statuses, including: (1) *Identity Achieved*, (2) *Moratorium*, (3) *Foreclosure*, and (4) *Identity Diffused*. *Identity achieved* refers to the subject who has undergone a crisis and has become devoted to an occupation or a set of beliefs.[222] *Moratorium* implies the individual is experiencing a crisis, in other words, grappling with unresolved questions.[223] Although he has not fully committed, he is actively searching for an identity to adopt and claim as his own.[224] On the other hand, *foreclosure* addresses the individual who gets passed down a set of beliefs and commits to those beliefs without undergoing a crisis.[225] However, *identity diffusion* speaks to the individual that has not decided upon an occupation or set of beliefs, nor has he made a commitment.[226]

Black Identity Studies

In addition to adolescence identity development studies, it was important for me to know what existed in the field of Black identity studies. There are several important works in the field

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[220] Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968), 16.
[221] James E. Marcia, "Development and Validation of Ego-Identity Status," 551.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid., 552.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.

of Black identity studies that are relevant for this study. For instance, several theorists including Thomas, Cross, and Jackson developed models of black identity formation. Although others have contributed to the discussion, the models of Thomas, Cross, and Jackson hit the mainstream and continue to this day to have an impact on psychological studies. Thomas, in 1970, was amongst the first theorists to present a model of black identity formation. Thomas conceptualized *negromachy* as a form of mental illness in which African Americans question their self-worth and depend heavily on white society for their self-definition.[227] He then elucidated five stages that assist Black Americans in overcoming *negromachy*.[228] The first stage, *withdrawal*, is expressed when an individual isolates themselves from white America, decrying white oppression, while attempting to work through the minutia of *negromachy*.[229] The second stage, *confessions* or *testifying*, is indicated through an individual's acknowledgement of self-denial.[230] For the third stage, the person engages in *information processing*, which involves learning about his personal background as well as black history. The fourth stage is the *activity* stage, in which an individual seeks involvement in the black experience through cultural practices or by joining social groups that address the black condition. The fifth and final stage, *transcendence*, is actualized when a person internally resolves social divisions such as race, gender, age, and so forth; and sees themselves as a member of a larger humanity. Seemingly, his model hinged on the post-civil rights aspiration of assimilating further into mainstream white America.

Perhaps, the most recognized of the black identity models was Cross' psychological *nigrescence* model, first presented in 1971. *Nigrescence* signifies the "process of becoming

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[227] William E. Cross Jr., "The Thomas and Cross Models of Psychological Nigrescence: A Review," The Journal of Black Psychology 5, no. 1 (1978): 13–14.
[228] Ibid., 15.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.

Black."[231] Like Thomas' model, the Cross model also consists of five stages, including: (1) *Pre-counter*, (2) *Encounter*, (3) *Immersion-Emersion*, (4) *Internalization*, and (5) *Internalization-Commitment*.[232] During the *pre-encounter* stage a person rejects a black frame of reference and adopts the Eurocentric abstractions of individualism over community and the pursuit of status and material by any means.[233] The *encounter* stage is characterized by a person's negative experience with white racism that leads them to abandon their old worldview.[234] While the *immersion-emersion* stage consists of the person completely adopting a black nationalistic worldview, indulging in information about the black experience, and frequently participating in black initiatives. The fourth stage, *internalization*, speaks to the person who acknowledges racial oppression and finds complete comfort being around black people; but also willing to engage and take up friendships with others of different cultures. *Internalization-Commitment*, the final stage, addresses the person who not only has reconciled his two opposing worldviews, but is committed to participating in activities that are meaningful to the group.[235]

Building on the works of both Thomas and Cross, Jackson proposed a four-stage Black identity model known as the black identity development (BID) theory. The first stage, *passive-acceptance*, describes the individual who unconsciously supports white systems of oppression. The second stage, *active-resistance*, characterizes the individual who develops hostility against white social, political, cultural institutions and their standards. *Redirection* is the third stage, in which the person possesses Black values but they no longer function from a position of hostility

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[231] Ibid., 13.
[232] William E. Cross Jr., 16.
[233] Thomas A. Parham, "Cycles of Psychological Nigrescence," The Counseling Psychologist 17, no. 2 (1989): 199.
[234] Cross Jr., "The Thomas and Cross Models of Psychological Nigrescence: A Review" 17.
[235] Ibid., 18.

against whites. While the person who maintains a positive self-worth as a Black person and can interact with other racial groups without compromise represents the final stage, *internalization*. All three models are similar to each other and prove the impact of racism on identity development.

Recent research surrounding black identity studies tends to focus on school underachievement and success. In their acclaimed article titled, *Black Students' School Success: Coping with the "Burden of 'Acting White*,'" Fordham and Ogbu highlighted "within-group factors" that hinder academic performance.[236] They posit, "The school experience of black children is implicated because, under the circumstance, schooling is perceived by blacks, especially by black adolescents, as learning to act white, as acting white, or as trying to cross cultural boundaries."[237] They found that successful African American students adopted several strategies to defy the label of acting white, including: participating in sports and other activities outside of the academic realm, clowning around amongst their peer group, soliciting protection from "bullies" and "thugs," and not bragging or activities that draw attention to their academic accomplishments.[238] Others such as Durkee have challenged Fordham and Ogbu's notion that acting white insults are mainly targeted at high academic achievers.[239][240] Instead, they argue, acting white pertains mainly to a person's "speech, music preferences, clothing, and extracurricular activities."[241]

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[236] Signithia Fordham and John U Ogbu, "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the ' Burden of ' Acting White''",'" The Urban Review 18, no. 3 (1986): 201.
[237] Ibid.
[238] Ibid., 202.
[239] Myles I. Durkee et al., "Cultural Invalidations: Deconstructing the 'Acting White' Phenomenon Among Black and Latinx College Students," Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, (2019): 202 https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000288.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.

Impediments to Identity Development for African American Males

Majors and Billson's Cool Pose

Richard Majors and Janet Billson contend that African American males withstand oppressive environments by engaging in a constant performance which includes "unique patterns of speech, walk, and demeanor."[242] This performance, or cool pose, enhances the African American males' confidence, dignity, and self-worth. Furthermore, posturing and standing out allows the black male to avoid becoming society's invisible man. by warding off the humiliation of racial oppression and discrimination, cool pose. Majors and Billson assert:

> Being cool invigorates a life that would otherwise be degrading and empty. It helps the black male make sense out of his life and get what he wants from others. Cool pose brings a dynamic vitality into the black male's everyday encounters, transforming the mundane into the sublime and making the routine spectacular.[243]

Ultimately, cool pose is the ultimate mask "that suggests competence, high self-esteem, control, and inner strength" while concealing deep feelings of sadness, self-doubt, hurt, pain, and vengeful rage brought about by racism.[244]

Being cool in African American culture is traced back to Africa in which noble confidence was attached to ancient rituals of linguistics, dance, mating, warrior cults, and more.[245] During slavery, Black males discovered that passivity, subservience, submissiveness, and docility saved them from "psychological and even physical brutality."[246] Adopting Uncle Tomism and Samboism led to the praises of being labeled as the good negro. Cool pose, also, came in the form of Black humor and entertainment—a form of posturing that allowed African

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[242] Richard Majors and Janet M. Billson, Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America (New York: Lexington Books, 1992), 2.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Ibid., 5
[245] Ibid., 57.
[246] Ibid., 59.

American males to survive the lynchings, debasement, rapes, and violence of the Jim Crow South. To these ends, cool pose symbolizes the Black male's proficiency at concealing his emotions.

Today, cool pose is expressed through dancing, playing sports, unique hairstyles, stylish clothing, customized vehicles, and more. However, underneath accessories of coolness remain the pain of America's racial discrimination and lack of opportunity. Majors and Billson assert: "The African-American man in this country has been 'nobody' for generations. The purpose of styling, then, is to paint a self-portrait in colorful, vivid strokes that makes the black male 'somebody.'" In other words, cool pose is adopted by African American males for the sake of gaining recognition in a world that would rather have them tucked away.

Aronson and Steele's Stereotype Threat

Considering the well-publicized achievement gaps between White and Black Americans in scholastic environments, Aronson and Steele attempt to understand the impact of negative stereotypes upon the self-concept. They gathered a group of Black college freshmen and sophomores to take a standardized test. Black students performed more poorly on the test than White students when they encountered racialized stereotypes. Without the stereotypes, however, Black students performed better and equivalently with White students. The results confirmed that performance in intellectual domains can be harmed by the awareness that one's behavior might fulfill a negative stereotype.

Essentially, performance can be altered when one supposes that they are in danger of confirming a negative stereotype about their group. This does not mean that the person believes the stereotype, however, when the stereotype become relevant. Aronson and Steele tested the theory on a group of African American students in an intellectual and school environments. They

found that stereotype threat impaired the efficiency by causing distraction, narrowing their focus, causing anxiety, and lead to the withdrawal of one's effort, and can even cause over effort.[247] Furthermore, stereotype threat may also lead to a person having a lower expectation of their ability which can result in undermined motivation.[248]

When taking a test, for example, feelings of frustration can lead to self-doubt that align with negative stereotypes that that question the ability of that group in that intellectual domain. In addition to the frustration, stereotype threat can cause "an arousal that reduces the range of cues participants are able to use."[249]

Black Muslim Identity Development Studies

Yusuf Nuruddin is one of the few scholars that addresses the topic of Black American Muslim identity. In his article titled *African-American Muslims and the Question of Identity: Between Traditional Islam, African Heritage, and the American Way*, he borrows from Ali Mazruri and argues that African-American Muslims have inherited a "triple heritage" consisting of (1) *Westernization,* (2) *re-Africanization*, and (3) *re-Islamization*.[250] Westernization refers to life during the post-bellum period when former African slaves found themselves completely alienated from their African heritage and forced to assimilate into the western lifestyle.[251] Re-Africanization suggests that Westernized Africans desired to reconnect with their African identity.[252] While, re-Islamization correlates with re-Africanization in that the ancestors of West

[247] Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 69, no. 5 (1995): 809.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid., 799.
[250] Nuruddin, "African-American Muslims and the Question of Identity," 216.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.

Africans were often Muslims and, therefore, re-connecting with their African heritage meant re-connecting with their Islamic heritage.[253] Seemingly, Nuruddin's triple heritage model unveils more layers of conflict than Du Bois' double conscious model. Nuruddin asserts:

> Thus the African-American Muslim community has experienced ideological conflict in several directions. Externally, it has had to deal with the European-American and the African-American establishments in this country and with various factions of the global *umma* or worldwide Muslim community. Internally, it has come up against the ideologies of Islamic cultural nationalists, Islamic separatists, and Islamic ecumenicalists. These encounters, of course, form the social, cultural, and political underpinnings of the social-psychological conflict of identity that the African-American community continues to undergo.[254]

In sum, Nuruddin's triple heritage model and statement provides the basis to justify a theoretical model that addresses African American Muslim identity conflicts through the lens of social psychological.

Black Christian Identity Development Studies

Gathering the insights from psychodynamic theories and black liberation theologies, Lee H. Butler Jr. presents the *Theory of African American Communal Identity Formation* (TAACIF). Butler Jr. contends that African Americans are traumatized daily and live "protracted-traumatic stress lives" constantly bombarded by racism, classism, and sexism.[255] His model assumes that an African American will have to endure traumatic encounters for their entire lives.[256] Veering from the universal stage theories of Freud and Erickson, the TAACIF framework recognizes that life is not universal, and that life experiences affect social groups differently. This point of departure

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[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid., 219.
[255] Butler, Jr., *Liberating Our Dignity, Saving Our Souls: A New Theory of African American Identity Formation,* 123.
[256] Ibid., 159.

from his predecessors is essential to note considering that these prominent theorists did not consider African American lived experiences when constructing their models.

To this end, TAACIF divides African American life into two primary stages including: (a) *foundational period* and (b) *constructive period*.[257] The foundational period captures the historical memory of chattel slavery and Jim Crow segregation that continues to weigh heavily upon the African American collective psyche. This period also includes the lived experience of Africans before being enslaved in the Americas. The constructive phase, on the other hand, addresses the identity negotiations for African Americans that have taken place post-civil rights. During the foundational period, the *historical self* emerges and directs the individual to discover their true sense of self.[258] While the constructive period includes African spirituality –a feature that emphasizes communal and cultural life of African Americans.

In addition, there are four themes that Butler Jr. features on the foundational side, which include: (a) emotional development, (b) existential longing, (c) learning the rules, (d) and identity and play.[259] These themes transition into four additional themes on the constructive side, including: (a) relational development, (b) existential search, (c) living the paradox, and (d) identity and work.[260] Between the foundational and constructive sides, Butler Jr., acknowledges the constant rage that African Americans experience because of racial oppression. According to Butler Jr., the historical self and African spirituality produce the creativity that is needed to overcome the debilitating rage brought about by oppression.

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[257] Ibid., 160.
[258] Ibid., 163.
[259] Ibid., 161.
[260] Ibid., 161.

Reviewing Butler Jr.'s model, I felt that his framework lacked the practicality that is necessary for religious and secular institutions to utilize as a tool of significant reform. However, I was impressed by Butler's ability to construct his own framework by synthesizing the theories of Jung, Erikson, and Freud. His interdisciplinary approach inspired me to integrate psychological theories, historical narratives, and Islamic theology for the RRIS model.

Muslim Identity Development Studies

In a journal article titled "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity," Lori Peek explores religious identity formation by conducting an ethnographic study on second generation Muslim American University students in New York and Colorado.[261] From her research she concluded that there are three stages of identity development amongst this target group: (a) *religion as ascribed identity*, (b) *religion as chosen identity*, and (b) *religion as declared identity*.[262] Religion as an ascribed identity connotes being handed a religious tradition from socializers, such as parents, without choosing a faith tradition. To this category Peek asserts, "Individuals absorb and internalize many norms, values, and behaviors when they see them exemplified by their parents, and others long before they understand them intellectually."[263] Religion as a chosen identity indicates that young adults enter a stage of identity formation in which they begin to reflect on their inherited identities.[264] Ultimately, this type of reflection will lead them to choose or abandon that religious identity. According to Peek, for most of the

[261] Lori Peek, "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity," Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review 66, no. 3 (2005): 220.
[262] Ibid., 215
[263] Ibid., 225.
[264] Ibid., 226.

participants in the study, "beginning college marked the most critical period of reflection and identity transition."[265]

The third stage, religion as declared identity, speaks to the aftermath of the crisis that occurred on September 11, 2001.[266] Many participants admitted that their Muslim identity became more salient due to their faith tradition being demeaned by public opinion. This category was the most interesting to me considering that Muslims got to taste what Black Americans have been tasting for centuries being the constant victims of covert and overt racial attacks. This article solidified my belief that the crisis of racism helps shape the religio-racial identities of African American Muslim adolescent males.

Conclusion

This literature review has explored the fields of psychology, Africana Islamic studies, identity studies, and Black identity studies. Literature in these fields support the findings of this dissertation. I divided this chapter into the following topics: (a) psychological theoretical frameworks, (b) historical overview of religious education in the African American context, (c) adolescent identity development studies, (d) Black identity studies, (d) Muslim identity development studies, and (e) Impediments to Identity Development for Black American Males. For the next chapter, we examine whether or not Islam's concept of self correlates with modern psychology's concept of the self.

[265] Ibid., 227.
[266] Ibid., 230.

Chapter 3: The Religio-Racial Self: Integrating Perspectives

Introduction

Constructing a new model for the identity development of Black American Muslim adolescent males calls for an interdisciplinary approach. This chapter sets out to establish the compatibility between the Islamic conceptualization of the self and the self in accordance with modern Western psychology. As I will demonstrate, the field of psychology is not new to the Islamic ethos; though the two spheres of thought may seem contradictory, they can be mutually supportive. In addition, I will present a foundational framework that will outline the features of the religio-racial self and guide the remainder of this dissertation.

In this chapter, I place both worlds, Islam and psychology, in a dialectical exchange in order to discover commonalities and distinctions between the two. I approach this topic systematically by dividing it into four sections. The first section reviews previous and contemporary scholarship that contributes to the development of the burgeoning field of *Islamic psychology*. The second section examines the notion of the self from the viewpoints of symbolic interactionism, structural symbolic interactionism, and identity theory. The third section explores whether identity theory's concept of the self is compatible with Islam's primary texts. In the last section, this chapter draws on the various perspectives of the self to present the three-stage model of the religio-racial self.

Islamic Psychology or Islam and Psychology?

The Islamization of modern western psychology has been in the making for over four decades.[267] However, Muslim psychologists have neither agreed on a viable designation nor have they developed unified definitions, conceptualizations, standards, and theoretical models for this endeavor.[268] Although *Islamic psychology* is a designation that has been used in many publications, some scholars suggest that the term *Islam and psychology* is more fitting because of the lack of agreement between scholars in the field.[269] Elucidating the current state of Islamic psychology, Carrie York Al-Karam, the author of *Islamic Psychology: Towards a 21st Century Definition and Conceptual Framework*, asserts:

> Based on this broad array of fragmented scholarship, it appears that at present, Islamic psychology is defined and/or conceptualized according to however a particular scholar understands it which is usually based on his or her own work. Given this challenge, if an Islamic Psychology (IP) discipline has any hope of flourishing and contributing to the broader knowledge economy, a definition of what the field is as well as a conceptual framework that links scholarship is needed so that researchers can think, integrate material, and identify ways forward.[270]

Considering Al-Karam's observation and that psychological theories in this dissertation originate from Western psychology, the designation *Islam and psychology* seems to be suitable for the current study. Moreover, this dissertation adopts the definition of Paul M. Kaplick and Rasjid Skinner, who suggest that *Islam and Psychology* is "the interdisciplinary field that explores human nature in relation to Islamic sources and which uses this knowledge to bring human beings into their best possible state, physically, spiritually, cognitively, and emotionally."[271]

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[267] Carrie York Al-Karam, "Islamic Psychology: Towards a 21st Century Definition and Conceptual Framework," Journal of Islamic Ethics 2, no. 1–2 (2019): 107.
[268] York Al-Karam., 97.
[269] Paul M. Kaplick and Rasjid Skinner, "Review: The Evolving Islam and Psychology Movement," European Psychologist 22, no. 3 (2017): 199.
[270] York Al-Karam, "Islamic Psychology: Towards a 21st Century Definition and Conceptual Framework," 99
[271] Kaplick and Skinner, "Review: The Evolving Islam and Psychology Movement," 199.

Approaches to Integrating Islam and Western Psychology

In line with Kaplick and Skinner, this dissertation identifies three modern approaches to the Islamization of modern western psychology, including: (a) The Islamic filter approach, (b) The Islamic psychology approach, and (c) the comparison approach.[272] The Islamic filter approach refers to Islamic scholarship that analyzes modern western psychology through a critical Islamic lens while paradoxically still utilizing the Western psychological framework.[273] For example, Malik Badri, the author of *Cultural and Islamic Adaptation of Psychology: A book of collected paper*, contends that Muslim psychologists are often conflicted about teaching western concepts that are antithetical to Islam.[274] However, they have little choice considering the advanced laboratory techniques and research methods of the western academy. Badri explains:

> Though western social sciences are soulless in methodology and background philosophy, no modern country can live today without their good uses. We can mention in this respect some of the methods that the social sciences have refined to study social behavior. For example, the laboratory and field experiment, archival research, surveys and interviews and a host of other methods and techniques. These methods can be adopted to benefit the Muslim Ummah and the spread of Islam.[275]

For this approach, Muslim psychologists filter out problematic psychological theories and concepts and adopt those that align with the Islamic framework.

The Islamic psychology approach claims that Islamic psychology was derived from Islam's primary sources of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.[276] Furthermore, those that use this

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[272] Ibid., 200-201.
[273] Kaplick and Skinner, "Review: The Evolving Islam and Psychology Movement," 200.
[274] Malik Badri, Cultural and Islamic Adaptation of Psychology: A Book of Collected Papers Volume 1 (Manchester, UK: Human Behavior Academy, 2015), Kindle Edition Loc. 634 of 5090.
[275] Ibid., Loc. 640 of 5090.
[276] Kaplick and Skinner, "Review: The Evolving Islam and Psychology Movement," 200.

approach take the philosophical works and psychiatric techniques of early Muslim scholars as the secondary sources of Islamic psychology.[277] This approach is modeled in the writings of Skinner. In his article, *An Islamic Approach to Psychology and Mental Health*, Skinner draws upon 11th-century Muslim scholars, Abu Yusuf Al-Kindi and Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, to add the missing spiritual component to Western psychology and psychiatry.[278]

Finally, the comparison approach conflicts with the first two approaches.[279] That is because proponents of this approach hold western psychological theories and concepts as equal with Islamic primary sources.[280] Scholars who use this approach tend to downplay the differences that exist between the Islamic and Western psychological perspectives.[281] Kaplick and Skinner assert this approach does not contribute "to the conceptual development of an Islamic psychology" and can, perhaps, be harmful to it.[282]

Taking these approaches into account, this dissertation utilizes the Islamic filter approach. Without a standard framework and universal definition of the field, the Islamic psychology approach is not plausible for this study. Moreover, for this study to be seen and adopted as a credible Islamic model, Islam and its sources must remain salient. For this reason, this dissertation refrains from the comparison approach. To these ends, I employ the Islamic primary sources of the Qur'an and Sunnah to filter out the western psychological concepts that are incompatible with the Islamic ethos. Additionally, the mutually critical correlation model allows for a dialectical exchange between both paradigms.

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[277] Ibid.
[278] Rasjid Skinner, "An Islamic Approach to Psychology and Mental Health," Mental Health, Religion and Culture 13, no. 6 (2010): 548-550.
[279] Kaplick and Skinner, "Review: The Evolving Islam and Psychology Movement" 200.
[280] Kaplick and Skinner.
[281] Kaplick and Skinner., 201.
[282] Kaplick and Skinner.

I undertake this endeavor knowing that the major difference between the Islamic framework and the Western psychological framework is that Islam places God and revelation at the center of self-knowledge. Moreover, Islam and the Qur'an promote the idea that there is no success or well-being in life except through gaining closeness and worshiping God (Qur'an 11:88). Stryker, Burke, Deci, Ryan, Markus, Nurius, Eccles, and other western theorists, on the other hand, do not attribute optimal functioning to God and conceptualize the self as being created by social interaction. Amber Haque contends, "Modern psychology makes grave assumptions that human behaviors are observable by the senses and therefore subject to quantification and measurement, while ignoring the transcendental aspect in man. Humanity cannot always be measured in mechanical, materialistic, and reductionistic ways." Nevertheless, modern Western psychological theories, if filtered through Islam's primary sources, can benefit Black American Muslim adolescent males and their socializing agents.

Foundational Scholarship in Islam and Psychology

The primary subject matter of Islamic psychology or Islam and psychology is the notion of the self or what the Qur'an terms as the *nafs*. *Nafs* is an Arabic word often defined as self, soul, personal identity, or psyche.[283] The term has two primary meanings according to its usage in the Qur'an: (a) the soul and (b) the self.[284] Another term that is often used interchangeably with *nafs* is the term *rūh*. *Rūh* is defined as soul, human life, or spirit. Abd Allah al-Suhayli (1114 – 1185), in Ibn Kathīr's famous Qur'anic commentary, explains the difference between the *nafs* and the *rūh*:

[283] Hans Wer, Hans Wer: A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, ed. J. Milton Cowan, Fourth (Illinois: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1960), 1155.
[284] Dr. Aisha Utz, Psychology From The Islamic Perspective, 1st ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: International Islamic Publishing House, 2011), 66.

> As-Suhayili mentioned the dispute among the scholars over whether the *rūh* is the same as the *nafs*, or something different. He stated that it is light and soft, like air, flowing through the body like water through the veins of a tree. He states that the *rūh* which the angel breathes into the fetus is the *nafs*, provided that it joins the body and acquires certain qualities because of it, whether good or bad. So then it is either a soul in (complete) rest and satisfaction (89:27) or inclined to evil (12:53), just as water is the life of the tree, then by mixing with it, it produces something else, so that if it mixes with grapes and the grapes are then squeezed, it becomes juice or wine. Then it is no longer called water, except in a metaphorical sense. Thus we should understand the connection between *nafs* and *rūh*; the *rūh* is not called *nafs* except when it joins the body and is affected by it. So in conclusion we may say: the *rūh* is the origin and essence, and the *nafs* consists of the *rūh* and its connection to the body. So they are the same in one sense but not in another. This is a good explanation, and Allah knows best.[285]

This dissertation borrows from this elucidation and uses the word *nafs* to refer to the human self. Even with explanations such as this, the Qur'an makes it clear that humanity has not been given the full details about the human soul (Qur'an 17:85).

To this end, works pertaining to the *nafs* were common even before attempts to Islamicize modern psychology. Many of the early Muslim philosophers wrote about the *nafs* and its distinct characteristics. According to many, Al Ash'ath Bin Qais Al-Kindi (801-866), was the first Muslim scholar to write about the *nafs*. He wrote about dreams, spiritual grief, sorrow, depression, and other topics that today would be categorized as psychology or clinical psychology.[286] Another early scholar, Ali Ibn Sahl Rabban At-Tabari (838-870), is considered "a pioneer in the field of child development" and was a proponent of psychotherapy.[287] Abu Zaid

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[285] Ismail bin 'Umar Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, ed. Safi-ur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri (New York: Darussalam, 2000), 78.
[286] Amber Haque, "Psychology from Islamic Perspective: Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars and Challenges to Contemporary Muslim Psychologists," Journal of Religion and Health 43, no. 4 (2004): 361.
[287] Haque.

Al-Balkhi (850-934) is known as "the first cognitive and medical psychologist who was able to clearly differentiate between neuroses and psychoses."[288]

The prominent Abu Bakr Mohammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi (864-932), in his treatise called al-Tibb al-Ruhani (Medicine for the Soul), presents ways to heal illness within the human spirit.[289] Turkish Muslim philosopher Abu Nasr Mohammad Ibn Al-Farakh (870-950), also known as Al-Farabi, discussed ideas that mirror concepts in modern social psychology and talked about the impact music has on the soul.[290] Abu Ali Ahmad B. Muhammad B. Ya'kub ibn Miskawayh (941-1030) wrote on ethics and psychology in his acclaimed titles, especially in his *Tahdhib Al-Akhlāq* (Refinement of Character). Yet, the famous philosopher, Abu 'Ali Al-Husayn B. 'Abd Allah Ibn Sina (980-1037) wrote about the mind and its features in his book *Ash Shifa* (The Treatment).[291] Many of these works culminated into a field of study known as *ilm an-nafs* or self-knowledge. In fact, *ilm an-nafs* was a subject being taught at Nishapur University in the fourteenth century.[292]

Moreover, when it comes to the study of the *nafs*, there are a few foundational frameworks that have been utilized by contemporary Muslim scholars to boost an Islamic psychology paradigm, one of them being Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali's (1058-1111) framework of the four parts of the self: the *qalb* or the metaphysical heart, *ruh* or the metaphysical soul, *nafs* or the self, and *aql* or the mind.[293] In addition, Al-Ghazali presented a Qur'anic framework that divided the *nafs* into three types: (a) *nafs Ammāra* or the commanding

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[288] Haque., 362.
[289] Haque.
[290] Haque.
[291] Haque.
[292] Skinner, "An Islamic Approach to Psychology and Mental Health" 548.
[293] Haque, "Psychology from Islamic Perspective: Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars and Challenges to Contemporary Muslim Psychologists" 366.

soul (Qur'an 12:53), (b) *nafs lawwāma* or the reproachful soul (Qur'an 75:2), and (c) *nafs mutmainnah* or the tranquil soul (Qur'an 89:27). *Nafs ammāra* implies the *nafs* that is ruled by its carnal passions and base nature, leading to overindulgence. *Nafs lawwāma* refers to the *nafs* that feels guilt and remorse and can discern between good and bad decisions. *Nafs mutmainnah* is the *nafs* that has reached the ultimate peace and contentment with its Creator.

Besides Al-Ghazali's frameworks, Shams Al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Abī Bakr (1292-1350), also known as Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya or Ibn Qayyim, presented his stages of the heart. This paradigm is similar to what Al-Ghazali proposed, especially considering that some scholars used the term *qalb* or heart interchangeably with *nafs*. Interestingly, the word qalb is derived from a root that means to turn or to change.[294] According to Ibn Qayyim:

> Hearts are of three (types). (The first) is the one devoid of faith and devoid of all dood. With such a denighted heart, the devil relaxes his whisperings, for he has already taken residence in this heat, a territory for him to rule as he pleases –in complete control.
>
> The second type is the heart illuminated by faith. Lamps are lit therein, but the shadows of passions and impulses remain. In this heart, the devil sometimes finds a welcome, sometimes rejection; but it is a territory he yearns for. The war waxes and wanes. People of this kind vary greatly; among some the devil usually wins; among others he is usually defeated; among others still he sometimes (wins) and sometimes (loses).
>
> The third type is the heart brimming with faith, illuminated by its lights, and the heart (of one) from whom the veils of passion have been lifted and shadows dispelled –so light shines forth in his breast. In that kindles glow, distractions are burnt up when they approach. This heart is like the firmament protected by stars; when a devil approaches, a meteor is cast down and he is burnt up. Surely no heaven is more sacrosanct than the believer. Allah protects him even more than He does the heavens. For while the heavens are the temple of the angels, the repository of revelation, the place where the lights of obedience shine forth, the believer's heart is the repository of *tawheed*. The love of Allah and gnosis. It is where the lights of faith shine on. It deserves to be guarded and protected from the plots of the foe, who will obtain nothing of it save through deceit and its moments of negligence.[295]

[294] Utz, *Psychology From The Islamic Perspective*., 72.
[295] Utz., 78.

Both, Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim's stage models show the dynamism of the human metaphysical interior. Furthermore, both paradigms make it clear that the self cannot develop without improving one's relationship with God. These paradigms are suitable for integrating a spiritual component into modern Western psychology.

Towards an Islamic Psychology

Contemporary Muslim psychologists continue to build upon the foundation laid by Al-Ghazali, Ibn Qayyim, and other classical Muslim scholars. There have been several attempts to build a conceptual model that can legitimize Islamic psychology. For example, Abdul-Fattah R. Hamid, the author of *Self-Knowledge and Spiritual Yearning*, presented the seven selves that a person must pass through to reach psychospiritual maturity and become a "fully functioning *Khalīfa*" or deputy.[296] The selves include: (a) *an-nafs al-ammāra* or the commanding soul, (b) *an-nafs al-lawwāma* or the reproachful soul, (c) *an-nafs al-mulhima* the inspired soul, (d) *an-nafs al-qana'ah* or the content self, (e) *an-nafs al-mutmainnah* the tranquil soul, (f) *an-nafs al-radiyah* or the self that God is pleased with, and (g) *an-nafs al-kāmilah* or the perfected self.[297] Showing the continuity of knowledge, three of the categories are mentioned by Al-Ghazali. In later chapters, I will discuss the selves in Al-Ghazali and Hamid's models and how they relate to the possible selves framework.

Walid Briki and Mahfoud Amara propose their perspective of Islamic self (PIS). This model integrates Ibn Al-Qayyim's three-*qalb* model, Al-Ghazali's three-*nafs* model, and Robin

[296] Abdul-Fattah R. Hamid, Self Knowledge and Spiritual Yearning (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1982), 81.
[297] Hamid., 81-87.

Vallecher's dynamical social psychology.[298] They elucidate three major features of the Islamic self. Firstly, the Islamic self is dynamically structured to overcome the "life test" and aim towards Islamic excellence. Secondly, the self is structured to overcome the trials of life. The self, according to the PIS, is divided into three: "The desire-ego, reproachful ego, and *fitrah*."[299] Thirdly, the self "can be mathematically formalized into a parsimonious framework."[300] The PIS framework defines "the self as a dynamical system characterized by the emergence of self-organized stable and unstable patterns taking the form of positive or negative dynamics."[301] Their model can apply to Muslims in every facet of life including sports, business, and other lifestyles. Overall, the model emphasizes spiritual growth, emotional, cognitive, and social morality.[302]

Seeking to provide an Islamic theoretical framework for Islamic psychology, Abdallah Rothman and Adrian Coyle presented their "Islamic model of the soul."[303] Using grounded theory, Rothman and Coyle interviewed 18 academic and religious experts to develop a prospective model. According to their model, *fitrah* indicates that a person is born with "an innately pure and good nature" that can change over time depending on external forces.[304] The *qalb* has the propensity towards *fitrah* or *nafs* (lower impulse) and is the place of the intellect.[305]

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[298] Walid Briki and Mahfoud Amara, "Perspective of Islamic Self: Rethinking Ibn Al-Qayyim's Three-Heart Model from the Scope of Dynamical Social Psychology," Journal of Religion and Health 57, no. 3 (2018): 837.
[299] Ibid., 837-38.
[300] Ibid., 836.
[301] Briki and Amara, "Perspective of Islamic Self: Rethinking Ibn Al-Qayyim's Three-Heart Model from the Scope of Dynamical Social Psychology" 1.
[302] Briki and Amara., 847.
[303] Abdallah Rothman and Adrian Coyle, "Toward a Framework for Islamic Psychology and Psychotherapy: An Islamic Model of the Soul," Journal of Religion and Health 57, no. 5 (2018): 1731.
[304] Rothman and Coyle., 1742.
[305] Rothman and Coyle.

Like Hamid, Rothman and Coyle borrow from Al-Ghazali and incorporate the three stages of the *nafs* into their model.[306] They also borrow from Ibn Miskawayh and others, to address moral reform with concepts such as, *tahdhib al akhlaq* or refinement of character, *tazkiyat an nafs* or purification of the soul, and *jihad an nafs* or struggle against the soul.[307] Rothman and Coyle acknowledge that the completion of their model is still underway.

The indication from all three contemporary models is that there will be multiple Islamic psychologies unless Muslim psychologists form a collective and merge their models to set up a universal theoretical framework for Islamic psychology. Furthermore, it is evident that the theorists behind these three contemporary models drew from many of the same Islamic sources – an observation that makes me hopeful about a future field called Islamic psychology.

These three models along with classical Muslim scholarship will help in the completion of this undertaking. I was particularly interested in their usage of stage models from Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim. For his seven-*nafs* framework, Hamid added four selves to Al-Ghazali's three-*nafs* paradigm. I felt the four additional *nafs* were unnecessary and could have been subcategories rather than main categories. Although interesting, Briki and Amara's utilization of the dynamic systems approach to Ibn Qayyim's three-*qalb* model makes their paradigm partly impractical. Nevertheless, Al-Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim's classical stage models will also inform the RRIS model. I was also interested in how Briki, Mahfoud, Rothman, and Coyle used the concept of *fitrah*. This concept will also be a prominent feature in the RRIS model. After gaining a deeper understanding of the Islamic perspective of the self, the next section will explore the

[306] Rothman and Coyle., 1743.
[307] Rothman and Coyle.

self according to modern Western psychology, in particular symbolic interactionism and identity theory.

The Self According to Psychological Theorists

The word psychology is derived from the combination of two Greek words, "psych" and "logos."[308] Psych refers to "soul" while the word logos means "study of."[309] This coincides with the Islamic field of *'ilm al-nafs,* which is translated as knowledge of soul or some translate the word *nafs* as self or ego. Like Islam, the concept of the self is an essential focal point in modern Western psychology. Considering there are multiple branches of psychology, this dissertation borrows its understanding of the self from identity theory, a prominent theory in sociology and social psychology, rooted in symbolic interactionism.[310] In the next section, I discuss this understanding.

The Self in Symbolic Interactionism

The term symbolic interactionism was coined by Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) and based on the ideas of philosopher, sociologist, and psychologist, George Herbert Mead (1863-1931).[311] According to this perspective, the self emerges out of the human mind.[312] The mind is the part of the self that attaches *meanings* to the *symbols* that the self encounters. The term *meaning* is a response to a stimulus and meaning leads to certain behaviors and thoughts. For example, one stimulus is the *adhan* or the call to prayer that leads to the shared response of thinking about prayer and performing a preparatory ablution.

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[308] Haque, "Psychology from an Islamic Perspective: Contributions of Early Muslim Scholars and Challenges to Contemporary Muslim Psychologists," 372.
[309] Haque.
[310] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," 201.
[311] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 18.
[312] Burke and Stets., 9.

Concerning the term *symbol*, it is a stimulus that prompts a shared response. The meaning of the symbol is agreed upon by a community or a culture. Social groups may derive different meanings from the same symbol, making its meaning relative to that social group. For example, tattoos on a person's body can be considered a symbol that evokes a set of responses from people. Responses may include categorizing the person as bad, which then leads a person to clutch their wallet or purse. Another person may respond with admiration and appreciation for the artistry of the tattoo. The encounter with the tattoo as a symbol leads to a subjective experience that produces different meanings for different people. The self and others observe and imitate the responses of others when they encounter a similar circumstance. Consequently, these responses become a symbol when it becomes shared between members of a social group.

Additionally, the self can become a symbol and the self can derive meanings from itself as a symbol.[313] This is one of the central features of symbolic interactionism and identity theory. The self, that is, has the ability to observe, evaluate, identify, criticize, and manipulate itself as well as hold itself accountable—just as it does to other symbols in society.[314] In other words, the self can assume the role of both subject and object to affect its own future.[315] Elaborating more about the significance of this process, Burke and Stets assert:

> Indeed, having conscious goals for the self depends upon the ability to see the self and understand the status of the self in the environment. To move the self literally or figuratively from some point A to another point B, one has to perceive the self and recognize that one is at point A, and one has to see where point B is and see how to move the self to point B. Finally, one has to take action to carry out this movement and to recognize when one has arrived at point B. For example, if Tom wants to go from his office to his car, he has to recognize that he is currently in his office; he has to know where his car is parked; he has to see how he might negotiate his way from his office to where his car is parked; and finally, he has to actually move himself from his office to his

[313] Burke and Stets., 304.
[314] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory 9.
[315] Burke and Stets., 9.

> car. In this way, by acting toward and on the self, Tom, or anyone, is able to accomplish his goals.[316]

Like other symbols, these "self symbols" communicate to the self as well as others what to anticipate from our behavior within the social environment. Thus, while the self is molded by social interaction, the self is also highly influential upon society.

To further explain this process, Mead divides the self between the "I" and the "me." The "I" is the self that acts and performs to carry a person towards achieving a goal.[317] While the "me" assumes the role as the other, evaluating the "I's" performance and offering critique.[318] The "me" is highly qualified to evaluate being that it has "social knowledge of the community or the culture in which the individual lives."[319] As an infant, the "me" self is underdeveloped while the "I" initiates actions without the "me's" social knowledge. The "me" eventually develops and gains knowledge of proper responses and behavioral expectations through experience and observing shared values of other members of the society.

For Mead, the self develops through observing and interacting with other members of society. The self derives meaning from symbols that are attached to languages, gestures, things, events, and people. Moreover, the self is evaluated by itself, through which symbols are derived, prompting a response from itself and others. This is the social process from which the self emerges.

The Self in Structural Symbolic Interactionism

Adopting the ideas of Mead, Stryker developed the structural version of symbolic interactionism that informs identity theory. *Structural symbolic interactionism* is built on the

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[316] Burke and Stets., 19.
[317] Burke and Stets., 20.
[318] Burke and Stets.
[319] Burke and Stets.

basic premise that "society shapes self, which shapes social interaction."[320] Structural symbolic interactionism focuses more on the role of social structure in the environment rather than the agency of individual actors. Seemingly, traditional symbolic interactionism supports the notion that actors can achieve any goal they would like without society preventing them.

Structural symbolic interactionists argue that even if a person sets out to achieve their goal, society must provide resources and opportunities for them to do so.[321] Therefore, while symbolic interactionism views the society as unstable and "continuously in a state of flux," structural symbolic interactionism sees it as organized, stable, resilient, and able to uphold systems through patterned behavior between societal members.[322] Our parents, social and educational institutions, and media teach us about this organized system through socialization.[323] As Burke and Stets mention, "Indeed, every situation has an implicit status hierarchy, a distribution of resources, a set of norms that shape and guide interaction and so forth, and this may constrain what actors can accomplish."[324] All this simply says that the self is produced from a society that is "patterned and organized."[325]

The Self in Stryker's Identity Theory

As a product of structural symbolic interactionism, identity theory was developed on the premise that the self is a reflection of society.[326] Stryker and Serpe describe a society that is complex, multifaceted, organized into different parts, groups, classes, institutions, and

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[320] Richard T. Serpe and Sheldon Stryker, "The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research,* ed. Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L Vignoles (New York: Springer, 2011)., Loc. 8990 of 34251.
[321] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 35.
[322] Burke and Stets., 34.
[323] Burke and Stets.
[324] Burke and Stets., 35.
[325] Burke and Stets., 37.
[326] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," 205.

experiences both dissension and harmony.[327] Likewise, the self is not unitary but complex, multifaceted, organized into parts, and going to experience dissension and harmony.

This notion is borrowed from William James who asserts that persons possess "as many selves as groups of persons with which they interact."[328] Modifying this notion, Stryker argues that the self is complex and possesses as many identities as the number of social groups (classes, categories, groups, etc.) with which a person is associated.[329] To this end, the diversity of the self that Styker and others describe is the variety of identities that reside in the self. Gregory P. Stone believed this part of the self corresponds with the self that Mead referred to as the *me* self.[330] For instance, a person can simultaneously be a father, jazz musician, and a business owner. These identities represent the roles within distinct social networks of individuals that share common meanings. The role of father is tied to a family, jazz musician tied to a band, and business owner tied to a business.[331] Furthermore, the individual possessing these identities becomes the common link between social networks.[332] So now the family of the father is linked to the band, and the business is linked to the family, and so forth.[333]

Understanding that the self is complex and divided into multiple identities is critical to identity theory's exploration of role choice or why a person chooses to respond one way as opposed to another. Stryker and Serpe pose the following query that identity theory sets out to deal with: "Why is it that one man chooses to spend a free weekend afternoon taking his children

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[327] Stryker and Serpe.
[328] Stryker and Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory," 286.
[329] Ibid., 206
[330] Sheldon Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 30 , No . 4(1968), 559.
[331] Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, "The Development of Identity Theory," Advances in Group Processes 31 (2014): 59.
[332] Stets and Burke.
[333] Stets and Burke.

to the zoo, while another chooses to spend that time on the golf course with his buddies?"[334] This question is best answered through a concept called *identity salience,* which is defined as the probability that identities will be called into use under a given circumstance.[335]

Identity salience is better understood by the *salience hierarchy* or the system in which multiple identities are organized within the self. The position of the identity on this hierarchical scale depends on its salience.[336] In the case of the person who is both an avid sports fan and a churchgoer finding that their Bible study is on the same night their favorite team is playing, their decision depends on which identity—sports fan or churchgoer—is higher on the salience hierarchy.

The degree of salience indicates a person's commitment to that identity. For Stryker, commitment refers to the social and personal cost involved in abandoning the role or position in a particular social network. If Brian quits the basketball team, he will lose his scholarship, his relationships with his coaches and teammates, his potential NBA contract, his fans, his popularity, his reputation, and more. Brian will most likely determine that his commitment to basketball is too high to abandon the sport. Identity theory divides commitment into two dimensions: (a) *Interactional commitment* and (b) *affective commitment*. Interactional commitment is the quantitative aspect of commitment in that a person has a large number of relational ties to people in an identity.[337] Affective commitment is the qualitative aspect of identity meaning that the person has deep emotional ties to others in a social group.[338] Stryker

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[334] Serpe and Stryker, "The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory," Loc. 9061 of 34251.
[335] Serpe and Stryker., 9060.
[336] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," 206.
[337] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 47.
[338] Burke and Stets.

and Serpe's affirmed the following hypothesis in a research study of religious identity salience: "The higher the commitment, the higher the identity salience."[339]

Identity Theory's Identity Control System

Based on the *perceptual control theory* developed mainly by William T. Powers, scholars of identity theory developed a *control system* that consists of four components of an identity that proves useful for this dissertation's model: (a) *identity standard*, (b) *input*, (c) a *comparator*, and (d) an *output*.[340] As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, a *meaning* is a response to a stimulus. Every identity includes a *set of meanings* or standard characteristics in accordance with which the person in the social role is expected to behave.[341] For instance, being a husband in some cultures may hold the meanings of being loving, caring, supportive, loyal, and so forth. Identity theory confirms that the sets of meanings make up the *identity standard*. Moreover, the number of meanings contained in the identity standard varies depending on the identity.

The *input* refers to a person's perception of their own behavior in relation to the identity standard.[342] For example, Hāmid's identity standard says that an *imam* or Muslim preacher should frequently study religious literature. Due to laziness, he has not studied in one month and he now perceives that his behavior is not on par with being an *imam*. His perception forms the input. Both, the input and the set of meanings in the identity standard, correspond with the "me," as postulated by Mead.[343]

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[339] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," 212.
[340] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 61.
[341] Burke and Stets., 63.
[342] Burke and Stets., 65.
[343] Burke and Stets., 31.

The third component is the *comparator*, which compares the input with the identity standard.[344] If the input and the standard do not align, an error signal is produced. Returning to the prior example, the *imam* identity standard is telling Hāmid that his behavior is not aligned with the role of an *imam*. Seeing the discrepancy between the input and the identity standard, the comparator gives off the error signal. Finally, the output is the behavior that results from the error signal. Assuming Hāmid enacts meaningful behavior in the environment based on the error signal, this behavior is the output. Overall, the goal of this control system is to match the input with the identity standard.[345]

Identity verification is a key process in the identity system. This process is the result of bringing the input "into agreement with the identity standard."[346] People modify their behavior to reach this agreement. Its opposite, *non-verification*, occurs when a person's input fails to correspond with their identity standard.[347] Studies showed that a discrepancy between the input and the identity meanings will result in negative emotion. Burke and Stets, for example, found that issues with verifying the spousal identity led to distress, depression, and reduced commitment to the spousal identity.[348]

The Salient Religio-Racial Self

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I establish the compatibility between the notion of the self in Islam and in symbolic interactionism and identity theory before merging the various perspectives about the self to construct a three-stage model for the religio-racial self. As a point

[344] Peter J. Burke, "Identity Processes and Social Stress," American Sociological Review 56, December (1991): 837.
[345] Burke.
[346] Stryker and Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory," 288.
[347] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 112.
[348] Stryker and Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory," 288.

of departure, this dissertation does not claim to possess all-encompassing knowledge about the intricacies of the self. In the Qur'an, a passage narrates an instance when Prophet Muhammad was approached by questioners who wanted details about the soul. He was commanded by God to reply, "The soul (*ar-rūh*) is of the affair of my Lord. And humanity has not been given of knowledge except a little." (Qur'an 17:85) asserts:

> The verse indicates that the capacity of humans to comprehend the true nature of the soul is limited. We will never be able to discover the secrets of the soul, of life and death, and what is beyond it. Science will never be able to conquer this topic because the unseen world in outside the realm of scientific enquiry and methodology.[349]

Thus, despite gathering multiple perspectives about the self, this complex entity remains a mystery.

Islam and Symbolic Interactionism

The Qur'an states that every human self was created from *nafs wāhidah* or a primordial self (Qur'an 4:1; 7:189; 39:6). In his famous exegeses known as *al-Tashīl li Ulūm al-Tanzīl,* Andalusian exegete, Abu'l-Qasim Ibn Juzay al-Kalbi (1294-1340), states that *nafs wāhidah* is Adam.[350] According to Mead and other identity theorists, "society shapes the self."[351] How was the self of Adam shaped if he could not interact with other groups that made up society? This query is dealt with in a Qur'anic passage that seems to support assumptions made by symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic interactionism claims that humanity exists in a "named world."[352] To this end, Burke explains:

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[349] Utz, Psychology From The Islamic Perspective, 68.
[350] Abu Al-Qasim Ibn Juzayy Al-Kalbiy, At-Tashil Li'ulum At-Tanzil, ed. Muhammad Salem Hashem, 3rd ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiyah, 2015), 172.
[351] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," 202.
[352] Stryker and Serpe., 204.

> Because we are dealing with selves and symbols, most interaction is not between persons qua persons but between persons who are occupying named positions (statuses) in named groups or organizations while engaged in named patterns of behavior (roles)… As a father, one can talk with his daughters. As a husband, he talks with his wife. As a member of an organization, he talks with other members. As a friend, he talks with friends.[353]

These names are accompanied with meanings that trigger certain responses upon the encounter. For instance, interacting with one's grandmother requires a different set of responses than interacting with one's sister. Through these names, we know how to behave towards others and what to expect regarding their behavior towards us. Moreover, the use of symbols (names) allows the self to organize the world and minimize confusion.

Correlating with symbolic interactionism's concept of names, the Qur'an mentions that "He (God) taught Adam the names of all things (*asmā'a kullahā*). (Qur'an 2:31) Ibn Juzayy says that "the names of all things" denotes that God taught Adam "the names of human beings and named classifications of objects in order to distinguish the moon and the tree, and so forth."[354] Renowned Persian Muslim exegete, Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923), mentions that this passage means Adam was taught "the names that people use, such as human, animal, sky, earth, land, sea, horse, donkey, and so forth, including the names of the other species."[355] In order to interact with the world and what is in it, Adam needed to know who he was and who and what they were. Through the symbolic interactionism lens, the process of naming involves language, symbols, and signs.[356] In utilizing the symbolic interactionism framework to analyze this passage, I assume God "taught Adam the names of all things" carries the meaning that God

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[353] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 11-12.
[354] Ibn Juzayy Al-Kalbiy, *At-Tashil Li'ulum At-Tanzil*.
[355] Ismail bin 'Umar Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, ed. Safi-ur-Rahman Al-Mubarakpuri (New York: Darussalam, 2000), 187.
[356] Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, 13.

taught Adam the names, meanings, and proper responses to all of the objects that he would encounter in the world. Therefore, God taught Adam directly, while the descendants of Adam learned the names and meanings of people and things from interacting with symbols. Another item to reflect on is that God assigned original names and meanings to objects before interaction took place. This brings us to the concept of *fitrah* and the idea of God assigning the original meanings to people.

The *Fitrah*

Borrowing from the proponents of Islamic psychology and Islam and psychology, the concept of *fitrah* or natural goodwill is useful for this dissertation's model. Islam, like Stryker and Burke, recognizes the environment's influence on the self. In a noted tradition, Prophet Muhammad said, "The mother of every person gives him birth upon natural goodwill (*fitrah*). It is subsequently his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian. Had his parents been Muslim he would have also been a Muslim."[357] The word *fitrah* is from the root *fa-ta-ra* which means "to make, create, bring into being, and bring forth."[358] In this tradition, the word *fitrah* implies that God created human beings with an innate inclination to enact prosocial behaviors and submit to the Creator.

The concept of *fitrah* corresponds to what celebrated psychologist, Carl R. Rogers, refers to as an *actualizing tendency* which is an inherent propensity for "growth and fulfillment."[359] This would also imply God created humanity with a preliminary set of meanings that are

[357] "Sahih Muslim," USC-MSA Web Reference, accessed October 21, 2020, https://sunnah.com/muslim/46/40.
[358] Hans Wer, Hans Wer: A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, ed. J. Milton Cowan, Fourth (Illinois: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1960), 842.
[359] Carl R. Rogers, A Way of Being (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), Loc. 83 of 5908.

susceptible to being lost amidst a complex world. Furthermore, this *hadīth* highlights the impact that socializing agents, in particular one's parents, have on shaping the religious identity and values of the self. Burke explains that "as the self emerges as a distinct object, there is at the same time a merger of perspectives of the self and others and a becoming as one with the others with whom we interact."[360] That is to say, the religious identity is a consequence of frequent interaction with members of a religious group.

Imitation

This is further highlighted in another *hadīth* in which Prophet Muhammad said, "A person is upon the religion of his best friend (*khalīl*), so let one of you look at whom he befriends."[361] The understanding of this *hadīth* expands with Mead's explication of the self and social networks. Mead discussed the concept of *imitation,* which describes when a person adopts the response to a stimulus from observing others until the response becomes shared. Mead asserts:

> There does, however, seem to be a tendency to imitate among men, and in particular to reproduce vocal gestures. We find the latter tendency among birds as well as among men. If you go into a locality where there is a peculiar dialect and remain there for a length of time you find yourself speaking the same dialect, and it may be something which you did not want to do. The simplest way of stating it is to say that you unconsciously imitate. The same thing is also true of various other mannerisms. If you think of a certain person you are very apt to find yourself speaking as the other person spoke.[362]

Mead brings the example of a sparrow and a canary being placed in neighboring cages. After being around each other for a period, the sparrow begins to call out the same notes as the canary.

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[360] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 10.
[361] "Jami' at-Tirmidhi," USC-MSA Web Reference, accessed October 21, 2020, https://sunnah.com/search?q=A+person+is+upon+the+religion+of+his+friend+so+let+one+of+you+look+at+whom+he+befriend.
[362] George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 59.

Mead notes that, "The sparrow is influencing not only the canary, but also in hearing itself it is influencing itself."[363] Likewise, people unconsciously take on each other's gestures, accents, speech, and so forth. The above *hadīths* seem to align Islam's concept of the self with Mead and symbolic interactionism's concept of the self.

"I" and "Me"

Another concept that can be juxtaposed with Islam's primary sources is Mead's idea of the "I" and "me." There are a few texts that can be used to justify the merging of Mead's two-self paradigm with the Islamic self. One Qur'anic passage reads, "And indeed We have created man, and We know what his own self whispers to him (*yuwaswisu bihi nafsuhu*)" (Qur'an 50:16). This passage indicates that there is a part of the self that speaks to the other part of the self. Both the Qur'an and Mead illustrate the self as being able to have an inner dialectical exchange that resembles the conversation that occurs between two people. The Qur'an's suggestive self seems to match up to Mead's "me" being that the "me" as guides the "I" to behave within the guidelines of the community.

The Qur'an also declares, "Rather, man, against himself, will be an observer (*basīrah*)" (Qur'an 75:14). Commenting about this passage, Ibn Juzayy says that "indeed he is a witness (*shāhid*) against himself and he will testify against his limbs on judgment day.[364] Burke and Stets assert, "The 'me' is the perceptive-observer aspect of the self that looks at the action, looks at the environment, looks at the relation between the two, and guides activity of the 'I' to its intended end."[365] Presumably, the "me" would be the part of the self that the Qur'an refers to as the observer.

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[363] Mead., 61-2.
[364] Ibn Juzayy Al-Kalbiy, At-Tashil Li'ulum At-Tanzil Vol. 2, 513.
[365] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 20.

Besides the concepts of *fitrah*, imitation, and the "I" and "me," this dissertation fuses the salience hierarchy with Al-Ghazali's three-*nafs* framework, and Ibn Qayyim's three-*qalb* model. Before doing so, the next section examines whether identity theory's primary conceptualizations, identity salience, and commitment are compatible with Islam.

Identity Salience in the Sunnah

Identity theory's concept of religious identity salience refers to a person's religious identity juxtaposed with other identities on the salience hierarchy.[366] Although there are no direct references to the term in Islam's primary sources, there are hadiths that insinuate identity salience. For example, Islamic scholar, Imam Muslim, recorded an instance that correlates with the idea of religious identity salience. A scribe of Prophet Muhammad named Hanzala al-Usaydi said to him in the third person, "Hanzala has become a hypocrite."[367] Hanzala further explained, "When we are in your company, we are reminded of Hell-Fire and Paradise as if we are seeing them with our own eyes, but whenever we depart from you and attend to our wives, children, and wasteful worldly affairs, much of these things go out of our minds."[368] Well aware of Hanzala's predicament, Prophet Muhammad replied, "There is a time for this, and there is a time for that."[369]

In this *hadith*, Hanzala was experiencing a reduction of salience in his Muslim identity when he was with his wife and children. Perhaps being in the company of Prophet Muhammad and participating in acts of devotion meant that Hanzala invoked his religious identity with more

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[366] Stryker, "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research," 560.
[367] "Sahih Muslim," USC-MSA Web Reference, accessed October 21, 2020, https://sunnah.com/search?q=Hanzala+has+become+a+hypocrite.
[368] "Sahih Muslim."
[369] "Sahih Muslim."

frequency. When he returned to his family, he was still Muslim; however, his religious identity was activated with less frequency. Therefore, this hadith indicates that the environment can enhance the salience of one's religious identity.

Another *hadīth* that speaks to the fluctuation of one's religious identity on the hierarchy of salience is when Prophet Muhammad said, "Verily, the faith of one of you will wear out within him, just as a shirt becomes worn out, so ask God to renew faith in your hearts."[370] In this *hadīth*, Prophet Muhammad warned his followers that their religious identities are susceptible to a reduction on the hierarchy of salience. He recommends that they ask God to renew or raise their religious identities back to the top of the hierarchy. Unlike Prophet Muhammad, Stryker does not promote calling on God as a source to raise one's religious identity salience. In a study about religious identity salience, Stryker and Serpe found that higher commitment levels within a religious organization are tied to religious identities positioned higher on the salience hierarchy which is also tied to a greater amount of time spent in religious activities.[371]

Identity Commitment in the Qur'an

There are several passages in the Qur'an that set out to optimize commitment to the *ummah* or Muslim social network. The Qur'an says:

> And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided. (Qur'an 3:103)

This passage promotes commitment to the Muslim social network of believers. In other passages, the Qur'an warns Muslims about backbiting, spying, and calling each other offensive nicknames

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[370] "Al-Mustadrak," Daily Hadith Online, accessed October 20, 2020, https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2014/05/18/tajdid-faith-hearts-shirt/.
[371] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior" 213.

(Qur'an 49:11-12). Without social ties to the Muslim group, the Muslim identity would likely never become more salient than competing identities. In a corresponding *hadith,* Prophet Muhammad asked Yazid ibn Asad, "Do you love Paradise?" he replied "yes." The Prophet said, "Then love for your brother what you love for yourself."[372] To this end, the message of increasing the love between group members raises the levels of commitment which in turn increases the cost involved if one were to abandon their religio-racial identity.

The Self According to the RRIS Framework

The RRIS framework declares that the religio-racial self is complex, multidimensional, self-regulated, organized, and shaped by its environment. This dissertation ascribes to the classical opinion that the religio-racial self consists of four parts, including: the *qalb*, the *ruh,* the *nafs,* and the *aql.* Drawing from the various perspectives mentioned above, this dissertation presents a preliminary three-stage model of the religio-racial self that will inform the remainder of this project. According to the *Religio-Racial Salience Hierarchy,* the religio-racial self passes through three stages: (a) low religio-racial salience, (b) medium religio-racial salience, and (c) high religio-racial salience.

Low religio-racial salience. This stage describes when religio-racial identity is at the bottom of the salience hierarchy. The person in this category possesses a low interactional or affective commitment to their religio-racial social group. This is also the lowest level for the *nafs.* The stage, known as *an-nafs al-ammāra* or the commanding soul, is when the *nafs* is solely motivated off carnal pleasures. The Qur'an describes this lowliness with the following rhetorical

[372] "Musnad Ahmad," Daily Hadith Online, accessed October 20, 2020, https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2012/08/10/love-paradise-brother-yourself/.

question: Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire? (Qur'an 25:43). Essentially, the person deifies their lower self.

At this stage, the person's *qalb* or metaphysical heart is also at the lowest stage in which it is "devoid of faith and devoid of all good." Furthermore, at this stage the suggestive whispers of Satan dominate the *qalb*, calling it to disobey its Creator. Regarding Mead's "me" and "I" framework, the "I" at this stage disregards the "me." Greg M. Nielsen, in his acclaimed text titled *Norms of Answerability: The Social Theory Between Bakhtin and Habermas* asserts that, "The 'Me' disciplines the 'I' by holding it back from breaking the law of the community."[373] To this end, the "me" is not developed enough to show strength over the "I." Yet, the person at this stage is unable to verify their religio-racial identity. This usually results in negative emotions such as uncertainty, depression, and distress. Moreover, if identity-nonverification persists a person may feel compelled to change their identity.[374]

Medium Religio-Racial Salience. This stage describes when the religio-racial identity is in the middle of the salience hierarchy. Their commitment to their religio-racial identity has not reached its full potential. Therefore, the chart below places it at medium religio-racial identity commitment. Also, the person at this stage possesses *an-nafs al-lawwāma* or the reproachful soul, which implies that the person feels remorse for actions that violate Islam's primary sources. Taking from Ibn Qayyim's model, the person at this stage has a *qalb* "illuminated by faith." Lamps are lit therein, but the shadows of passions and impulses remain." About this type of *qalb*, Ibn Qayyim goes on to say that "People of this kind vary greatly; among some the devil usually wins; among others he is usually defeated; among others still he sometimes (wins) and

[373] Greg M. Nielsen, The Norms of Answerability: Social Theory Between Bakhtin and Habermas (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 135.
[374] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 180.

sometimes (loses)."[375] A person with this type of *qalb* sometimes fails and sometimes succeeds in overcoming their appetites and cravings.

While at this stage, the "I" is in a moral struggle with the "me." Seemingly, the "me" self is in competition with the suggestions of Satan. In his text, Nielsen mentions the case of a fictional character named Mikhail as an example of the struggle between the "I" and the "me." Mikhail confessed to his community that he murdered his ex-lover. For years, no one suspected him of committing such a horrendous crime. He slowly began to feel remorse for the crime which eventually led to his confession.[376] Subsequently, Mikhail was having a battle between his "I" and "me." Perhaps, this struggle between the "I" and the "me" represented *an-nafs al-lawwāma*.

Further, this person experiences both identity-verification and identity-nonverification. Their case epitomizes the statement previously mentioned that was made by Prophet Muhammad: "Verily, the faith of one of you will wear out within him, just as a shirt becomes worn out, so ask God to renew faith in your hearts."[377] The person at this stage wavers between strong faith and weak faith. Their strong faith correlates with verifying their Religio-Racial identity while their weak faith correlates with identity-nonverification.

High Religio-Racial Salience. This stage represents the highest level of religio-racial salience. A person at this stage displays the highest level of commitment to their religio-racial social network. Further, they possess *an-nafs al-mutmainnah* or the tranquil soul. This person experiences the height of inner peace because they are pleased with their Sustainer and their

[375] Utz, Psychology From The Islamic Perspective, 78.
[376] Nielsen, The Norms of Answerability: Social Theory Between Bakhtin and Habermas, 134.
[377] "Al-Mustadrak 5," Daily Hadith Online, accessed March 29, 2021, https://www.abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2014/05/18/tajdid-faith-hearts-shirt/.

Sustainer is pleased with them. (Qur'an 89:28) This person's *qalb* is no longer wavering between certainty and doubt but is illuminated by the light of faith. God places a protective fortress around the person's *qalb* that blocks access from visible and hidden devils.[378]

Additionally, the "I" and the "me" are fused together to form a team. The "I" is no longer like a child being chided by the "me." Mead makes an interesting assertion about religion and the fusion between the "I" and the "me":

> The impulse of the "I" in this case is neighborliness, kindliness. One gives bread to the hungry. It is that social tendency which we all have in us that calls out a certain type of response: one wants to give. When one has a limited bank account, one cannot give all he has to the poor. Yet under certain religious situations, in groups with a certain background, he can get the attitude of doing just that. Giving is stimulated by more giving. He may not have much to give, but he is ready to give himself completely. There is a fusion of the "I" and the "me." The "me" is not there to control the "I," but the situation has been so constructed that the very attitude aroused in the other stimulates one to do the same thing. The exaltation in the case of patriotism presents an analogous instance of this fusion.[379]

At this high level of religio-racial salience, the "me" and the "I" support each other. Finally, the person who has reached this height experiences identity-verification. According to Burke, a discrepancy between a person's perception of identity meaning and the identity standard leads to the person being susceptible to depression, stress, low self-esteem, and so forth.[380] On the other hand, when a person's inputs agree with their identity standard, they have feelings of efficacy and mastery.[381]

3.1 Religio-Racial Identity Salience Model

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[378] Utz, *Psychology From The Islamic Perspective*, 78
[379] George H. Mead, Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), 274-75.
[380] Burke, "Identity Processes and Social Stress," 844.
[381] Burke.

	Low Religio-Racial Salience	Medium Religio-Racial Salience	High Religio-Racial Salience
Religio-Racial Self	Low interactional or affective commitment Commanding *nafs* Q*alb* devoid of faith "I" disregards "Me" Identity-nonverification	Medium interactional or affective commitment Reproachable *nafs* Q*alb* that accepts or rejects Shaitan. "I" is in moral struggle with "Me" Identity-verification or nonverification	Aligned with *Fitrah* High interactional or affective commitment Tranquil *nafs* *Qalb* brimming with faith Fusing of the "I" and "me" Identity-verification

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Islam can accommodate the psychosocial theories selected for this dissertation. Symbolic interactionism and identity theory's conceptualizations—mainly that of self, identity commitment, and identity salience—have much to offer socializing agents of Black American Muslim adolescent males. The religio-racial self, like modern psychology's self, is structured not as a static entity but rather a fluid one, its movement being driven by its environment. Before delving into the main research, this chapter established the compatibility between Islam and psychology. The remaining chapters will build on the foundation laid in this chapter to present the research itself.

Chapter 4: Developing Needs-Supportive Religio-Racial Learning Environment

Introduction

The SDT framework addresses the "supportive conditions" that foster identity development in Black American Muslim adolescent males.[382] Deci and Ryan contend that needs-supportive environments target an individual's "inherent growth tendencies."[383] In this same vein, professor of psychology, Alan S. Waterman, discusses three goals of identity development, which include: "(a) the discovery of personal potentials, (b) choosing one's purposes in living, and (c) finding opportunities to act upon those potentials and purposes in living."[384] Environments designed with these goals in mind and that provide the basic psychological needs can lead a person to discover what Waterman terms as the *true self*.

Deci and Ryan's idea of inherent growth tendencies and Waterman's three goals of identity development and concept of the true self align with Islam's premier concept of *fitrah*, that is, human beings were born intrinsically good and have a natural affinity for pleasing God. To these ends, this chapter uses the SDT framework to examine the factors that guide Black American Muslim adolescent males to awakening their inherent growth tendencies and discovering their true selves.

This chapter is organized into five sections. Section one provides a brief introduction to SDT and the basic psychological needs. In this dissertation, SDT will be fused to the identity

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[382] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," American Psychologist 55, no. 1 (2000): 68.
[383] Ibid.
[384] Alan S. Waterman, "Eudaimonic Identity Theory: Identity as Self-Discovery," in Handbook of Identity Theory and Research, ed. Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignoles (New York: Springer, 2011), Loc. 13693 of 34251.

theory framework. To gain a full comprehension of SDT, each psychological need will be dealt with in its own distinct section. Section two outlines some of the key aspects of competence-support, including its theoretical features, barriers, relationship with identity-verification, practical application, and how it is addressed in the Qur'an and prophetic sayings and narratives. Section three examines SDT's conceptualization of autonomy-support, its thwarters, its application in the parenting and religious education domains, and its indications in the Qur'an and prophetic sayings and narratives. Section four reviews some of the existing literature on relatedness-support, its challenges, its implications for congregations, teaching, and parenting, and its support from the Qur'an and prophet sayings and narratives. The last section of this chapter presents some key takeaways that can be extracted from the RRIS model.

SDT and Basic Psychological Needs

As mentioned previously, individuals have multiple identities that are organized within the salience hierarchy. The position of the identity on the hierarchy depends on the frequency of the identity being called into use. Related to the salience of the identity is the commitment one has to the social network attached to the identity. Commitment consists of two dimensions—interactional and affective.[385] The higher the interactional or affective commitment, the higher the identity on the salience hierarchy. The main research question that this chapter sets out to tackle is: What factors increase the interactional and affective commitment to an identity?

For a partial understanding of this query, I refer to SDT. This framework provides some of the key factors that affect the identity commitment which, in turn, determines the position of an identity on the hierarchy. SDT posits that human beings must receive three basic universal needs including competence, autonomy, and relatedness "to support healthy psychological and

[385] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 47.

behavioral functioning."[386] SDT relates to identity in that people are inclined to engage in identity-related behaviors when the environment supports these three basic needs. These three psychological needs play a major role in strengthening the interactional or affective commitment one has to an identity.

Motivation is the foremost concern for those pursuing identities because people adopt roles as a consequence of motivation.[387] To this end, motivation emanates from within (intrinsic) or motivation can be brought about due to external factors (extrinsic). Ryan and Deci point out that children, from the time they are born, pursue activities that produce inward exuberance and excitement without the influence of outside forces, such as the promise of a reward.[388] That is, the mere interest in the activity may lead them to hone their skills and pursue its mastery. Additionally, Deci and Ryan note that intrinsic motivation can wane, grow, or level off, depending on "supportive conditions" such as positive feedback, or a worthwhile challenge.[389]

For instance, the young athlete displays his interest in the game by developing his skills and dedicating his time and resources to its mastery, all contributing to his identity as an athlete. Further solidifying his identity as an athlete is the encouragement offered to him by his teachers, relatives, and peers—his socializing agents. In this case, his socializing agents provided the supportive conditions that enhanced his internal feelings of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Support for competence was demonstrated when the feedback of his socializing agents confirmed his high skill level. Support for autonomy was provided when they encouraged

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[386] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 3.
[387] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being.," American Psychologist 55, no. 1 (2000): 69.
[388] Ibid., 70
[389] Ibid.

him in a sport that he chose to play, while support for relatedness was provided when his social group showed approval for his participation in the sport. It is clear from the research that socializing agents are especially crucial when adolescents are struggling to arrive at a viable identity because the support that they provide create the conditions that help propel adolescents into identity achievement.[390]

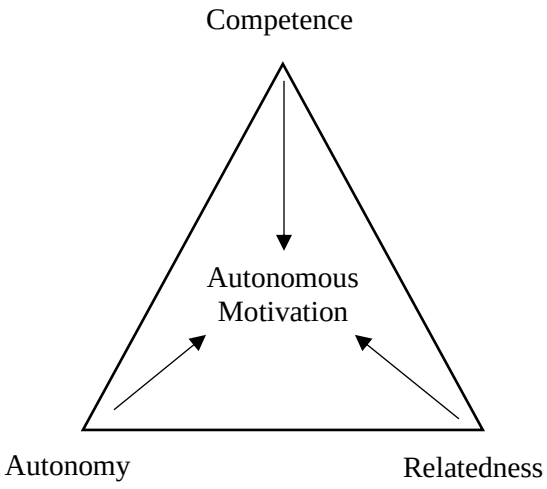

Figure 4.1. The Foundation of Sustainable (Autonomous) Motivation
Source: Stone, Deci, Ryan, 2008, 27.

Adolescence and Competence

Definition of Competence

Competence is a central theme in several theories including SDT and EVM. The research indicates that individuals' perceptions of their capabilities are powerful forces that contribute to their successes and failures. Deci and Ryan, for example, postulate that feelings of

[390] James E. Marcia, "Identity In Adolescence," in Handbook of Adolescent Psychology, ed. Joseph Adelson (New York: Wiley, 1980), 111.

competence or efficacy contribute to the intrinsic motivation that is associated with a task.[391] Eccles and her colleagues assert that people are more likely to engage in activities or adopt identities "for which they feel the most efficacious."[392] Examining competence support will bring us closer to knowing why the religio-racial identity of some Black American Muslim adolescent males may be more salient than others.

Competence and SDT

SDT's conceptualization of the basic need for competence was derived from White's groundbreaking work presenting the concept of *effectance motivation*.[393] Borrowing from White, SDT's conceptualization outlines people's desire for mastery and feeling effective at meeting challenges.[394] SDT conceptualization of competence is associated with the task that offers an *optimal challenge* as opposed to the task that is easy and demands little effort from people.[395] That is because people are motivated by opportunities that promote growth. Furthermore, competence is the feature that drives people to pursue their goals and successfully explore identities. Conversely, lacking competence can lead to fluctuation and feelings of indecisiveness when it comes to identity commitment. In sum, social environments can enhance feelings of competence, which in turn increases intrinsic motivation. If Black American Muslim adolescent

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[391] Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being" 70.
[392] Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action" 81.
[393] Richard M. Ryan and Arlen C. Moller, "Competence as Central, but Not Sufficient for High-Quality Motivation: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective," in Handbook of Competence and Motivation, ed. Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck, and David S. Yeager, Second Edi (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 214.
[394] Ibid.
[395] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 123.

males are not given adequate competence supports from socializing agents, they will never fully commit to their religio-racial identity.

Identity Theory's Identity Verification and Competence

Identity-verification occurs when a person achieves congruency between self-appraisals and the identity standard.[396] The research shows a strong causal and consequential relationship between the psychological need for competence and identity theory's concept of identity-verification.[397] Identity-verification can produce feelings of competence, while feelings of competence can lead to identity-verification. As an example of the former, Mustafa completed his homework and passed his exam, graduating from the eighth grade and achieving congruency with what it means to be an exceptional student. Mustafa feels efficacious for having met the expectations of significant others and the meanings associated with his role identity.[398] An example of the latter is seen in the athlete, Ali, who feels efficacious enough to try out for the varsity basketball team. Being cut the year prior did not diminish his competence. Seemingly, his failure motivated him to work harder and he made the team the following year.

Taking these examples into account, this dissertation argues that due to America's structural racism and discrimination, Black American adolescent males are often blocked from feeling efficacious like Mustafa and Ali and are thus prevented from confirming their identities throughout important domains.

The Role of Social Status

[396] Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, "Self-Esteem and Identities," Sociological Perspectives 57, no. 4 (2014): 415.
[397] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory 117.
[398] Ibid.

To these ends, there are a few impeding factors that explain the Black American males' challenges with verifying identities and feeling competent. First of all, by analyzing the research conducted by identity theorists, we find those with greater societal esteem and influence, such as being White or having higher educational and occupational status, are more likely to experience identity-verification.[399] This means those with higher status are more likely than those with lower status to experience the positive benefits of competence.[400] That is to say, that not only are those with higher status better off materially, they are better off psychologically.[401]

If we examine, for instance, the status-bearing gendered identity of American masculinity, it is conventionally defined as being a breadwinner, provider, procreator, and protector. Due to White institutionalized racism and harsh injustices, Black American males have consistently been denied access to expressions of idealized American masculinity. That is, they have been blocked from verifying American masculine identities. Addressing this issue, Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson postulate,

> The black male's path toward manhood is lined with pitfalls of racism and discrimination, negative self-image, guilt, shame, and fear. He struggles toward manhood with a sense that he lacks something; he is *manqué*. His schools place him in lower achievement groups; teachers speak of language deficits; economists call him disadvantaged; and psychologists refer to him as disordered.[402]

The longstanding challenge of confirming the masculine identity has deprived many Black American males of the psychological need for competence.

As a result of not being afforded these opportunities, many Black American males resort to antisocial behaviors. According to Majors and Billson, Black American males often use

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[399] Ibid., 52
[400] Ibid., 200.
[401] Burke and Stets.
[402] Majors and Billson, Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America, 31.

"rigidity and aggression" to achieve masculinity and status.[403] For Black American males, hiding fear and showing toughness has been a hallmark coping mechanism against identity-nonverification. From this standpoint, identity-nonverification is a potent means of predicting antisocial behavior.

Stereotype Threat

Besides social status, stereotype threat is another impeding factor to identity-verification and competence motivation for Black American Muslim adolescent males. Aronson and Steele, in their seminal work, proved that attaining the basic need of competence can be challenging for Black American adolescent males living in environments where they are perceived as being intellectually inferior.[404] Essentially, the threat of confirming stereotypes about one's group disrupts the cognitive process that is utilized to match personally perceived meanings with the identity standard.

Scholars have identified three "mechanisms" in which stereotype threat impedes upon one's "cognitive and social performances."[405] First, a stereotype threat causes a physiological stress response that overloads the *working memory*.[406] The *working memory*, also known as *executive function* and *executive control*, is located in the brain's prefrontal cortex and is responsible for controlling one's attention and regulating behavior.[407] Experiments conducted by Toni Schmader, Michael Johns, and Chad Forbes corroborate the hypothesis "that reduced test

[403] Majors and Billson., 33
[404] Steele and Aronson, "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans."
[405] Toni Schmader, Michael Johns, and Chad Forbes, "An Integrated Process Model of Stereotype Threat Effects on Performance," Psychological Review 115, no. 2 (2008): 798.
[406] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 10
[407] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 7

performance under stereotype threat is attributable to decreased working memory."[408] In one study, they found that stereotype threat reduced the working memory and negatively affected the performances of women given a math test in a room full of of men.[409] Women not under the threat of confirming a stereotype found increased functioning in their working memory and performed better at their math exams.[410]

Second, a person in the stereotype threat condition tends to be more conscious about the self and their performance in the situation.[411] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes explain that "the person under threat finds him or herself confronting two alternative hypotheses about his or her performance: 'Will I do well, consistent with my personal link to the domain?' or 'Will I do poorly, consistent with the negative link to the domain suggested by the stereotype?'"[412] In other words, people experiencing stereotype threat not only have to focus on verifying the identity of the domain, they must also disconfirm the negative stereotype about their group. On top of that, people under stereotype threat become hypervigilant about their internal state, searching for signs of stress and anxiety.[413] Having to make use of this much mental energy can deplete cognitive resources.

Finally, a person under stereotype threat must make an effort to regulate their negative thoughts and feelings during their performance –a process that is normally automated when not under stereotype threat.[414] Studies show that attempting to regulate feelings of anxiety during a

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[408] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 8
[409] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 8
[410] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes.
[411] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 12
[412] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 12-13
[413] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 14
[414] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 15

performance decreases working memory.[415] Like other mechanisms, emotional and thought suppression is effortful and can place more strain on the working memory.[416]

These mechanisms indicate that when Black American Muslim adolescent males are under the threat of confirming a stereotype, they may experience a physiological stress response that can deplete their cognitive resources. If under the threat of a stereotype, this target group may become more self-conscious and began to monitor their self and performance. Also, when faced with stereotype threat, Black American Muslim adolescent males may attempt to suppress negative thoughts and feelings, which can expend much needed cognitive resources. In essence, when Black American Muslim adolescent males are placed in environments they must verify their identities, disconfirm negative stereotypes about their group, and suppress negative thoughts and feelings, they will most likely exhaust the resources in their working memory, negatively impacting their performance.

Resources, Identity-Verification, and Competence

Yet another impediment to identity-verification for Black American Muslim adolescent males is their lack of resources. According to identity theorists Jan E. Stets and Alicia D. Cast, resources can be grouped into three categories: (a) *personal*, (b) *interpersonal*, (c) and *structural resources*.[417] Personal resources refer to how an individual feels about him or herself. In line with SDT, competence is a key personal resource that leads to the confirmation of identities. Elaborating more about this, Stets and Cast assert,

> When positive and efficacious feelings of the self are in motion, individuals will be more persistent in the face of difficulties in a situation. …verification of one's identity is an important dynamic in interaction, and those who feel good and competent about

[415] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes.
[416] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes., 16
[417] Jan E. Stets and Alicia D. Cast, "Resources and Identity Verification from an Identity Theory Perspective," Sociological Perspectives 50, no. 4 (2007): 520.

> themselves will be more likely to achieve verification because they will continue their efforts to work toward this goal even when they periodically fail. Periodic failures at identity verification are not devastating because these people have a reservoir of good feelings about themselves and strong beliefs about their capabilities that they can draw on to carry them through and help them cope. Perseverance usually produces desired results; here, the desired result is identity verification.[418]

Feeling competent not only helps in the identity-verification process, it also tempers the blow from identity-nonverification.

Interpersonal resources are gathered from relationships and interactions with others. Stets and Cast suggest that "trust and liking" between a group provides actors with interpersonal resources that can boost their chances of verifying identities.[419] Beside these, *role-taking*, a concept proposed by Mead, is another important interpersonal resource.[420] Role-taking denotes using the imagination and attempting to see the self from another person's perspective.[421] Additionally, interaction requires physical or virtual spaces and scheduled meetings to exchange ideas and build familiarity with one another. If there are no opportunities for actors to interact with others, they will lack the interpersonal resources that are needed to verify identities. Thus, religious environments must provide interpersonal recourses for Black American Muslim adolescent males or else they will look for alternative sources that may expose them to negative identities.

Finally, structural resources are the resources that raise an actor's social status such as one's race, education, occupation, and level of income.[422][423] Those with higher status use their structural resources to access opportunities to verify identities. Let us consider that school

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[418] Stets and Cast.
[419] Stets and Cast., 521
[420] Stets and Cast.
[421] Stets and Cast.
[422] Stets and Cast.
[423] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory 230.

funding depends on the property taxes that are paid in the community in which the school is located.[424] This means schools in urban areas that are made up of predominately Black American and Hispanic students have fewer resources than schools in majority-White, affluent communities. From an identity theory perspective, the residents of those neighborhoods have fewer structural resources. The benefit of structural resources, in this case, is that better-funded schools tend to have access to better books, computer and science laboratory equipment, as well as better teacher training and more honors and AP courses available for students.[425] Therefore, the lack of personal, interpersonal, and structural resources impede on the ability for Black American Muslim adolescent males to feel competent and verify positive identities.

Strategies for Providing Competence Motivation

Being denied competence means that Black American males have been forced to gather competence from unlikely sources. *Cool pose* is a potent source of competence for Black American adolescent males. According to Bilson and Majors, cool pose is a coping mechanism that protects competencies against micro and over aggressions. Majors and Billson assert, "The African-American man in this country has been 'nobody' for generations. The purpose of styling, then, is to paint a self-portrait in colorful, vivid strokes that makes the black male 'somebody.'"[426] Black American males, for years, have protected their feelings of competence by donning the mask as a subtle form of protest. Abandoning coolness, especially in America's inner-cities, threatens feelings of competence and makes Black American adolescent males vulnerable to insults and bullying from their peers.

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[424] Beth E. Kurtz-Costes and Taniesha A. Woods, "Race and Ethnicity in the Study of Competence Motivation," in *Handbook of Competence and Motivation*, ed. Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck, and David S. Yeager, Second ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 529.
[425] Ibid.
[426] Majors and Billson, Cool Pose: The Diliemmas of Black Manhood in America.

Muslim Cool

This dissertation rejects the notion of Black American Muslim adolescent males abandoning coolness. Without coolness, Black American Muslim adolescent males risk going invisible and being excluded from the public square. Su'ad Abdul Khabeer coined the term *Muslim cool* to describe the way in which being Black and Muslim intersects to form a domestic expression of Islam that is distinct from hegemonic religious and state structures.[427] Muslim cool is usually expressed through stylish clothing, social activism, the arts, and hip hop. Elucidating the concept of Muslim cool, Khabeer asserts,

> Hence, Muslim Cool is about self-making, about identity and subjectivity, about the way in which young Muslims see, experience, and interpret themselves in the world. Muslim Cool constructs and "shores up" social identity as a religious performativity that is raced and gendered. Muslim Cool is the engagement of Blackness as a blueprint for the Muslim self. It thus constitutes a direct challenge and a counterdiscourse to the anti-Blackness of broader U.S. American society as well as the ethnoreligious hegemonies of U.S. American Islam. Moreover, by engaging Blackness as a way of being Muslim, from food choices to scarf styles, suiting, youth organizing, and hip hop performances, Muslim Cool is an embodiment of the notion that Black Life Matters; it is a demonstration that Blackness is invaluable to our collective existence.[428]

Directing them to adopt the culture of other groups sends the message that they are objects of shame, which will thwart their competence. Muslim cool, therefore, is a competence-supportive construct that will be useful for the model presented in this dissertation.

Moreover, earlier religio-racial movements adopted Muslim cool by challenging institutionalized racism, instilling dignity, and promoting self-love in the Black male psyche through dogma, dietary guidelines, name changing, nonconforming dress, and community life. For instance, males in the Moorish Science Temple of America led by Noble Drew Ali, wore fezzes and turbans, changed their last names to El or Bey, and followed the Circle Seven Koran.

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[427] Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 2016), Loc. 105 of 5707.
[428] Abdul Khabeer., Loc. 3948 of 5707

The Nation of Islam, led by Elijah Muhammad, expressed coolness and offered masculinity by placing their men in neatly tailored suits, replacing their last names with X, adopting distinct beliefs, and establishing a successful Black economy. Jackson expounds, “With its members’ bow-ties and two-piece suits, their soldier-like demeanor and Ivy-League vocabulary, the Nation of Islam was able to create a deeply-felt and publicly recognized ‘Muslim’ identity without importing any of its material features from outside the United States.” The incredible feat of self-reliance is perhaps the hallmark of these groups’ Muslim cool.

To these ends, Muslim cool is principled posturing that affords Black American Muslim adolescent males an opportunity to express prosocial coolness that is competence- and autonomy-supportive and diminishes feelings of racial anxiety. Adopting Muslim cool means that socializing agents must provide religious spaces in which Black American Muslim adolescent males can embrace and express their Blackness through stylish clothing, poetry, playwriting, hip hop, sports, and more. Moreover, Social justice organizing and protesting anti-Black racism can be a useful form of cool pose. Additionally, religious spaces must provide a safe space for Black American Muslim adolescent males to remove the mask, be vulnerable, and reveal their sentiments about structural racism.

Fixed Mindset versus Growth Mindset

While Muslim cool calls for the preservation of selfhood, promoting a healthy mindset aims for self-improvement. As a point of departure, Carol S. Dweck and Daniel C. Molden pose an important question that relates to competence and achievement motivation: “Do people believe that their intelligence is a fixed trait or a malleable quality that they can cultivate through

learning?"[429] This question is relevant to the discussion about competence motivation and how one's mindset impacts their feelings of efficacy. When it comes to learning, people usually have one of two mindsets: a *fixed mindset* or a *growth mindset*. A *fixed mindset* implies that characteristics are viewed as being permanent, as if a person was born with or without the characteristic.[430] Proponents of this mindset, for example, may conclude that some people are just more intelligent than others. Students who employ the fixed mindset may say things like, "I've never been good at math." A growth mindset, on the other hand, is believing that a person's ability and intelligence can grow with effort and learning. With this type of mindset, students do not see a failed test as a permanent state but as an opportunity to learn and overcome a challenge.

A person's mindset has a direct effect on their beliefs about competence. A person with a fixed mindset sees competence as a quality that a person always has. If the task is difficult and they do not see signs of competence within themselves, they become discouraged and lose interest in the activity.[431] However, with the growth mindset, competence is a quality that develops with sustained effort and interest in the task. Dweck and Molden contend, "That growth of competence over time is then the occasion for growing confidence, pride, and interest."

Like I mentioned in the previous section, stereotype threat can alter one's performance when one supposes that they are in danger of confirming a negative stereotype about their group. Having a growth mindset is a partial solution that can temper the severity of stereotype threat upon one's performance.[432] If a person under a growth mindset confirms a negative stereotype in

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[429] Carol S. Dweck and Daniel C. Molden, "Mindsets: Their Impact on Competence Motivation and Acquisition," in Handbook of Competence and Motivation, ed. Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck, and David S. Yeager (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 135.
[430] Ibid., Loc. 212
[431] Dweck and Molden, "Mindsets: Their Impact on Competence Motivation and Acquisition" 135.
[432] Dweck and Molden., 135

a situation, they will not question their ability; rather, they will see the moment as an opportunity to learn and improve one's skills. Commenting about stereotypes, Peter H. Johnston, author of "Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Live," posits,

> In fact, people choosing fixed theorizing focus on information that confirms their stereotypes, ignoring disconfirming information. The more information goes against their stereotype, such as a poor, low-achieving boy doing well on a test, the less attention they give to that information. Within a fixed theory, once a student is judged as lazy (or friendly or learning disabled, etc.) we start to see evidence of it everywhere in their behavior. Their situation and psychological processes, such as intentions and feelings, take a back seat.[433]

To this end, Black American Muslim adolescent males need to adopt a growth mindset as protection against stereotype threat.

Saundra Yancy McGuire and Stephanie McGuire posit four strategies that will be useful for changing the mindset of Black American Muslim adolescent males: "(a) inspire belief, (b) ask [the] student to recall other challenges they have overcome, (c) explain the neurobiological basis of the growth mindset—namely, brain and plasticity, and (d) help student achieve gradual, persistent growth."[434] Inspiring belief refers to motivating students by sharing accounts of students who overcame challenging predicaments such as failing grades or academic obstacles.[435] Their second component consists of allowing students to share their personal narratives of triumph in the face of obstacles.[436] This can be done with a partner, small group, or in front of the entire class.[437] The third component calls for explaining the neurological argument

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[433] Peter H. Johnston, Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives (Portland: Stenhouse Publishers, 2012), 357.
[434] Saundra Y. McGuire and Stephanie McGuire, Teach Students How to Learn: Strategies You Can Incorporate Into Any Course to Improve Student Metacognition, Study Skills, and Motivation (Sterling: Stylus, 2015), 68.
[435] McGuire and McGuire.
[436] McGuire and McGuire.
[437] McGuire and McGuire.

behind the growth mindset. The student should be taught about the brain's ability to grow and reorganize itself.[438]

Positive Feedback

Research has indicated that positive feedback is especially effective in enhancing intrinsic motivation for "optimally challenging tasks."[439] Negative feedback, compared to positive feedback or no feedback, tends to obstruct intrinsic motivation.[440] However, if positive feedback is delivered in a controlling style, it can subvert intrinsic motivation. Taking this into consideration, there are two frameworks pertaining to feedback that will be useful for the model proposed in this dissertation. Geoffrey L. Cohen, Claude M. Steel, and Lee D. Ross suggest that socializing agents employ *wise feedback* or feedback "that discourages expectations and attributions of racial bias and that minimizes stereotype threat."[441] Socializing agents that use wise feedback reduce the danger of stereotype threat by communicating their confidence in the Black American adolescent male's intellectual ability without displaying signs of pretentiousness or assigning nonchallenging tasks.[442] Wise feedback also consists of reminding students that their intelligence is not fixed and that with effort, they can improve their abilities.[443]

Presenting another model, Johnson advises socializing agents to avoid using person-oriented criticism and praise and focus on the causal processes with process-oriented feedback. Phrases such as "You are a bad boy" or "I'm disappointed in you" focus on the individual.

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[438] McGuire and McGuire., 69
[439] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 123.
[440] Ryan and Deci.
[441] Geoffrey L. Cohen, Claude M. Steele, and Lee D. Ross, "The Mentor's Dilemma: Providing Critical Feedback across the Racial Divide," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 25, no. 10 (1999): 1303.
[442] Cohen, Steele, and Ross.
[443] Cohen, Steele, and Ross.

Similarly, person-oriented praise such as saying that "I'm proud of you" or "You're very good at this" can have the same effect as person-oriented criticism, in that both approaches can lead to a fixed-performance mindset.[444] Process-oriented praise and criticism, on the other hand, focuses the feedback on the process of completing the task. An effective process-oriented strategy is asking "how" questions. For example, "How did you do that?" "How do you know that?" Essentially, you are asking individuals to explain how they had an impact on the world. In sum, providing informational feedback such as wise feedback and process-oriented feedback is especially important for Black American males considering their vulnerability to low competence, identity nonverification, and stereotype threat condition.

Competence-Supportive Programming: African American Rites of Passage

This dissertation contends that the African American Rites of Passage program is a practical competence-supportive framework that can be adopted by the congregation of the Black mosque. AA-RITES has been traditionally used to facilitate a principled transition from childhood to adulthood. The program usually targets Black American adolescent males between the ages of 15 and 18 years.[445] AA-RITES is designed to instill a sense of self by learning African and Black American history, life skills, and character development.[446] Elucidating the AA-RITES initiatives, Alford, McKenry, and Gavazzi assert that,

> In recent years, rites of passage programs have been adapted and developed for young Black males to serve the purpose of providing Black youth many of the strengths that have been denied them as an oppressed group; such strengths include ethnic pride, self-esteem, self-respect, respect for others, and a variety of other 'healthy' behaviors. Equally

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[444] Peter H. Johnston *Opening Minds: Using Language to Change Lives* (Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2012) Loc. 673 of 3124, kindle.
[445] Gavazzi Rites of Passage 167
[446] Keith Alford, Patrick McKenry, and Stephen Gavazzi, "Enhancing Achievement in Adolescent Black Males: The Rites of Passage Link," in *Educating Our Black Children: New Directions and Radical Approaches*, ed. Richard Majors (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), 141.

> crucial is the need to expose young Black males to the strength of understanding and appreciating the role of Black men in history and culture. This strength ranks high in terms of lessons to be learned by rites of passage participants.[447]

Essential to the AA-RITES programs are elders who can transmit historical narratives that offer lessons from the lives of resilient luminaries from the African and Black American cultures.[448]

Useful for this dissertation's model, Hill recommends five AA-RITES objectives that include: "(a) a sense of true identity and feeling of connectedness to the Black community and diaspora; (b) a degree of social knowledge and understanding that will equip him to overcome racism and other debilitating circumstances; (c) a reverence for the natural worth and dignity of one's parents, extended family, and community; (d) a masculine ideal that conforms to profamily and prosocial values; and (e) a philosophy that honors and facilitates continued growth and development."[449] Each objective corresponds with many of the main tenants of Islam.

In the 1960s, Karenga designed an AA-RITES program that follows the *Nguzo Saba* or the Seven Principles of *Ma'at* (path of righteousness) which are: (a) *umoja* or unity, (b) *kujichagulia* or self-determination, (c) *ujima* or collective work and responsibility, (d) *ujamaa* or cooperative economics, (e) *nia* or purpose, (f) *kuumba* or creativity, (g) *imani* or faith.[450] I propose adapting oldser models like Hill's five objectives and Karenga's seven principles to draft new objectives and principles that reflect the religio-racial identity of being a Black American Muslim.

Competence-Support in the Qur'an

Competence-Support and Moses

[447] Ibid., 145
[448] Ibid., 146
[449] Ibid.
[450] Ibid., 147

Competence support is expressed in the Qur'an's narrative of Moses and his brother Aaron. God gave Moses and Aaron the charge of confronting the autocratic Pharaoh of Egypt, to invite him to worship one creator, God, and free the enslaved children of Israel (Qur'an 20:43). Before sending them to complete the task, God equipped Moses with a staff that transformed into a serpent and a glowing white hand (Qur'an 20:20-22). The Qur'an explains that Moses and Aaron approached the Pharaoh and said, "Verily, we are Messengers of your Lord, so let the Children of Israel go with us, and torment them not; indeed, we have come with a sign (*āyah*) from your Lord! And peace will be upon him who follows the guidance" (Qur'an 20:47).

Ibn Juzayy mentions that the sign, even though the word is singular, is referring to the miraculous staff and the glowing white hand of Moses.[451] After witnessing the signs, the Pharaoh accused Moses of being a skillful magician (*sāhirun 'alīm*) (Qur'an 26:34). The Pharaoh then called his best magicians to challenge Moses. During their encounter, magicians said to Moses, "O Moses! Either you throw first or we be the first to throw" (Qur'an 20:65). Moses replied, "'Rather, you throw.' And suddenly their ropes and staffs seemed to him from their magic that they were moving [like snakes] (Qur'an 20:66)."

Before his turn to throw his staff, Moses began to feel a deep sense of distress. Highlighting the inward state of Moses, the Qur'an states, "So Moses conceived a fear (*khīfa*) in himself (*nafsihi*)" (Qur'an 20:67). The term *khīfa* is defined as dread or fear.[452] Stryker and Burke may see Moses' feelings of negative affect as an error signal indicating that Moses' self-appraisal is not matching the identity standard. In this case, *khīfa* could be a result of identity-nonverification. Aronson and Steele may see *khīfa* as the stereotype threat condition, considering

[451] Ibn Juzayy Al-Kalbiy, At-Tashil Li'ulum At-Tanzil 19.
[452] Wer, Hans Wer: A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic 306.

that Moses came from an enslaved class of people. While *khifa,* for Schmader, Johns, and Forbes, may imply that Moses feared confirming a negative stereotype, thereby depleting the resources in his working memory. Seeing him in a negative state, God said to Moses, "Fear not! Surely, you will have the upper hand" (Qur'an 20:68). To all appearances, God gave Moses competence-supportive informational feedback so he could complete the role assignment given to him. Moses then felt efficacious enough to perform his miracles, which resulted in the conversion of seventy magicians who realized that Moses' display was not merely an illusion but was divinely inspired.[453] More importantly, it led to the release of an enslaved class of people.

Competence-Support and King Tālut

Competence-support is also found in the Qur'an's account of Tālut, the king who reigned over the Israelites (Qur'an 2:249). Preparing for war, Tālut and his army of eighty thousand men traveled until they arrived in front of the *Sharī'ah* river that flowed between Jordan and Palestine.[454] The Qur'an mentions that when they arrived at the river, Tālūt faced his army and exclaimed, "Verily! God will try you by a river (*nahr*). So whoever drinks thereof, he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is of me, except him who takes (thereof) in the hollow of his hand" (Qur'an 2:249). Exegetes explain that the soldiers who overindulged in the river's water were left behind and could not accompany Tālūt across the river to fight the enemy.[455] Exegetes cite a narration from Al-Bukhārī that mentions that when Tālūt set the conditions for crossing the river with him, the army was down to 310 men.[456] Further, after crossing the river, a portion of the army adopted defeatists attitudes with the statement, "We do not have the power (*tāqah*) to

[453] Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* 360.
[454] Ibid., 692
[455] Ibid.
[456] Ibid.

fight against Goliath (*Jālūt*) and his army (Qur'an 2:249)." This type of negative feedback can have a detrimental effect on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, leaving Tālūt's army in a condition of amotivation. Further elaborating this point, Deci and Ryan explain, "Specifically, feedback implying that one is incompetent has been found to produce personal helplessness, which is one type of amotivation."[457]

Therefore, responding with competence-support, another portion of Tālūt's army known as "those who knew with certainty that they were to meet God (*yazunnūna annahum mulāqullah*)," replied, "How often has a small group overcome a large group by permission of God (Qur'an 2:249)." Commenting on this portion is prominent Syrian exegete widely known for his Qur'anic exegesis titled Safwa At-Tafāsir, Muhammad Alī As-Sābūnī, who says that the group that made this statement were people of the highest integrity (*as-safwa al-akhyār*), the scholars (*al-'ulamā*), and the highly ethical (*al-abrār*) followers of Tālūt. After receiving competence-supportive feedback from this special group, Tālūt's army went on to face the infamous Goliath and his army. A young soldier named David (Dāwūd) bravely stood up and challenged the physically intimidating Goliath. An essential part of that victory was the competence-support he received from "those who knew with certainty that they were to meet their Lord (Qur'an 2:249)."

Competence-Support in the *Hadīths*

Competence and the *Hadīth* about *Sura Ikhlās*

Prominent recorder of *hadiths,* Al-Bukharī, relates a narration from Prophet Muhammad's young companion, Anas ibn Malik, who said, "A man from the *Ansār* used to lead

[457] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 123.

the people in prayer in the Masjid of Qubā.[458] He would always recite the *Sura* of Sincerity along with another *Sura* and his followers in the prayer began giving the man negative feedback.[459] The Prophet Muhammad questioned the man about his reasons for reciting the *Sura* when he led the prayer in which the man replied, "Verily, I love it (*Sura Al-Ikhlās*)."[460] Prophet Muhammad replied, "Your love of it will cause you to enter Paradise."[461] While the people complained, perhaps annoying the man, the Prophet Muhammad's response was an example of competence-supportive feedback. Seemingly, the Prophet Muhammad's response elicited feelings within the man of efficaciousness as a prayer leader and, perhaps, the people developed more confidence in the man's leadership.

Competence-Support and the *Hadīth* on Faith

According to the well-known companion to Prophet Muhammad, Abu Huraira, "Some of the companions came to the Prophet, and they asked him, "We find within ourselves that which is too terrible to speak of."[462] The Prophet said, "You have indeed found it so?"[463] They said, "Yes." The Prophet said, "That is apparent faith (*sarīh Al-Imān*)."[464] This group of companions were plagued by negative thoughts that began to concern them.[465] Interestingly, Prophet Muhammad did not inquire about the nature of these thoughts but instead he showed interest in how they felt about their thoughts. Furthermore, he did not judge this group or question their

[458] Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Ibn Kathir 629.
[459] Ibid.
[460] Ibid.
[461] Ibid.
[462] "Sahih Muslim," Daily Hadith Online, accessed November 22, 2020, https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2017/04/07/reject-bad-thoughts-ikhlaas/.
[463] Ibid.
[464] Ibid.
[465] Ibid.

religious commitment and belief. Instead, he gave them competence-supportive informational feedback by assuring that negative thoughts did not negate their faith in God.

Autonomy

Several studies across different domains have indicated the positive outcomes of autonomy-support. In the parenting domain, for example, studies have shown that children with more autonomy-supportive parents have fewer behavioral problems.[466] When work environments foster autonomy-support, the employees began "to value the work itself."[467] In the academic domain, autonomy-support is a strong predictor of student engagement in the classroom.[468] The research indicates that human beings have an affinity for choice and self-determination and they have an aversion to coercion and being controlled.

What is Autonomy?

Autonomy is defined as "the state of being self-governing."[469] Heteronomy, its opposite, is defined as a lack of self-determination.[470] SDT's understanding of autonomy has been derived mainly from the works of Fritz Heider and Richard de Charms. Heider argued that people's behavior is either the result of *personal causation* or *impersonal causation*.[471] Personal causation

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[466] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 319.
[467] Dan N. Stone, Edward L. Deci, and Richard M. Ryan, "Beyond Talk: Creating Autonomous Motivation through Self-Determination Theory," Journal of General Management 34, no. 3 (2008): 6.
[468] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 351.
[469] "Autonomy," Merriam-Webster, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/autonomy.
[470] "Heteronomy," Merriam-Webster, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heteronomy.
[471] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 51.س

implies that a person committed an act intentionally.[472] Impersonal causation refers to behavior enacted without intentionality or effort.[473]

Building from the work of Heider, De Charms argued that people can behave intentionally after "feeling pressured" or "being coerced."[474] Furthermore, De Charms proposed that all intentional acts were committed with an *internal perceived locus of causality* (I-PLOC) or as being performed without external forces.[475] Its opposite, *external perceived locus of causality* (E-PLOC), refers to those acts that were coerced or the results of external pressures.[476] De Charm also contended that people rather feel like an "origin" and are opposed to being treated like "pawns" and forced into circumstances that they do not choose.[477] Feeling like an origin coincides with personal causation and I-PLOC in that people have strong feelings of agency when they are performing a behavior.[478] Conversely, feeling like a pawn correlates with impersonal causation and E-PLOC and describes when a person's behavior is accompanied with strong feelings of "powerlessness and effectiveness."[479] The Origin-Pawn dimension is captured in the example of the person living under the roof of controlling parents who decides to move into their own apartment; they finally feel like an origin. Both, Heider and de Charms, supplied SDT scholars with the basis on which to formulate an argument for autonomy.

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[472] Ibid.
[473] Ibid.
[474] Ibid.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Ibid.
[477] Richard De Charms, Personal Causation: The Internal Affective Determinants of Behavior (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1983), 274.
[478] Ibid., 275
[479] Ibid., 275

Expanding the works of Heider and de Charms, SDT theorists were able to classify behaviors as intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, and as autonomous and controlled.[480] SDT recognizes that extrinsically motivated behavior can be heteronomous or autonomous. SDT theorists concluded that if behavior is motivated by extrinsic forces but aligns with one's values, the behavior is considered autonomous.[481] While behaviors that are performed because of external forces and fail to line up with one's values can be described as heteronomous or controlled.[482] Therefore, SDT's version of autonomy "refers to the experience of an action as fitting with interests and integrated values that one is wholeheartedly behind."[483]

Nevertheless, the concept of autonomy remains a source of contention amongst psychologists. An often-cited concern is that autonomy appeases to social structures that promote individualism and independence, which can be antithetical to collectivism and relatedness.[484] Albert Bandura, in his social-cognitive theory of agency, denied the concept of autonomy arguing that it referred to actions that are done independent of the environment.[485] Judith V. Jordan, too, sees autonomy, independence, and individualism as being virtually synonymous with one another.[486] Yet, Burrhus F. Skinner viewed all behavior as being controlled and disregarded the idea of external contingencies being controlling in some cases and autonomous

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[480] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 51.
[481] Ibid.
[482] Ibid.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being" 74.
[485] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 51.
[486] Edward L. Deci et al., "On the Benefits of Giving as Well as Receiving Autonomy Support: Mutuality in Close Friendships," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 32, no. 3 (2006): 315.

in others.[487] Ryan and Deci clarified that SDT's definition of autonomy can fit into both dependent and independent paradigms and refers to "feelings of volition."[488] They further cite a research study using Korean and American samples that found a greater correlation between autonomy and collectivistic attitudes than between autonomy and individualistic attitudes.[489]

Adultification of Black American Adolescent Males

Considering America's history of chattel slavery and segregation, autonomy-support is especially critical for Black American adolescent males. Like other groups, Black American Muslim adolescent males desire agency and not to be controlled and dragged along like pawns. Instead, they want to be origins that are given space to actualize their potential. However, due to a social obstructor known as *adultification* or when Black children are judged as adults, Black American adolescent males are prevented from enjoying an autonomy-supportive childhood in the home and school environments.

Ann Arnett Ferguson, author of *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*, contends that young Black American males are often imagined as being criminals or endangered species.[490] Black American males as criminals are destructive to themselves and others.[491] Under the trope, endangered species, they are animalistic and ill-equipped to flourish in modern life.[492] These two cultural images provide a basis for the adultification of young Black

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[487] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 51.
[488][488] Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being" 74.
[489] Ibid.
[490] Ann Arnett Ferguson, Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2020), 82.
[491] Ferguson.
[492] Ferguson.

American males.[493] This target group is blocked from truly experiencing childhood and are often evaluated, treated, and tried like adults. This is corroborated in a study conducted by Phillip Atiba Goff, Matthew Christian Jackson, Brooke Allison Lewis Di Leone, Carmen Marie Culotta, and Natalie Ann DiTomasso.[494] They presented evidence that Black American males are seen by others as being older and less innocent than their White peers in contexts that dehumanize Black Americans.[495]

This interpretive framework of suspicion can be traced back to slavery whence children were sold and "separated from their parents and forced into labor at any age."[496] During post-emancipation, White power structures lost the legal right to control Black bodies and thus found consolation in designating both Black men and boys as menaces to society. A more precise example of adultification is seen in the 1944 execution of 14-year-old George Junius Stinney Jr., the youngest person to be legally executed in the United States.[497] Thereafter in 1955, the terroristic lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till occurred after he supposedly whistled at a White woman.[498] Unfortunately, the more recent deaths of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, 17-year-old Jordan Davis, and 12-year-old Tamir Rice indicate that this racialized treatment of Black American adolescent males is deeply embedded in America's collective psyche.[499]

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[493] Ferguson., 84
[494] Phillip Atiba Goff et al., "The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 106, no. 4 (2014): 526.
[495] Goff et al.
[496] Ibid., 527
[497] Goff et al.
[498] T. Elon Dancy III, "The Adultification of Black Boys: What Educational Settings Can Learn from Trayvon Martin," in Trayvon Martin, Race, and American Justice, Writing Wrong, ed. Kenneth J. Fasching-Varner et al. (Boston: Sense Publishers, 2014), 52.
[499] Dancy III.

Adultification is expressed by socializing agents in the schools attended by Black American adolescent males. For instance, during Ferguson's research stint at an elementary school, a Black American adult male pointed out a young Black American male and commented, "That one has a jail-cell with his name on it."[500] Ferguson explains that Black American adolescent males are not given the dispensation of making mistakes based on childish naiveté.[501] Instead, their transgressions are filtered through cultural images and epithets and evaluated as the consequences of being inherently dangerous and naturally insubordinate.[502] This assertion is seen in how Black American males are disciplined in school compared to their White counterparts. Black American males are often victims of inequities, over-expulsions and suspensions, overrepresentation in special education, and exclusion from gifted and talented courses. Placing the onus on teachers, T. Elon Dancy III states, "Teachers are leaders of the classroom experience. The messages teachers consciously or subconsciously give to Black males will manifest themselves in Black male's perceptions of schools and American society."[503]

To these ends, adultification is a key mechanism that is utilized to justify controlling behaviors such as over-policing and over-disciplining Black American adolescent males. Socializing agents must undergo a paradigm shift and use autonomy-supportive techniques that permit Black American adolescent males to experience childhood, recapture their *fitrah*, and actualize their true selves. This dissertation proves that Black American adolescent males break behavioral norms as a result of neglect, lack of tending to, and direct and indirect racism.

Autonomy-Supportive Parenting

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[500] Ferguson, *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*.
[501] Ferguson., 86
[502] Ferguson., 1
[503] Dancy III, "The Adultification of Black Boys: What Educational Settings Can Learn from Trayvon Martin" 53.

Controlling environments obstruct identity commitment which in turn diminishes the prospect of religio-racial identities becoming salient. Therefore, autonomy-supportive parenting and teaching are both crucial for raising the salience and commitment of religio-racial identities in Black American adolescent males. Regarding the parenting domain, Deci and Ryan give a fitting example of autonomy-supportive parenting for the religious context:

> Consider an adolescent boy whose parents have emphasized the importance of religious beliefs or practices. He may, especially if his parents are controlling, attend religious services compliantly, doing so to avoid feelings of guilt. Alternatively, and under conditions of autonomy support, he may more fully accept his religion and its teachings, in which case he would not only attend services with enthusiasm but would also be more likely to actively assimilate the family's religious values and transfer these into his daily social behavior.[504]

Studies demonstrate that autonomy-supportive parenting leads to this type of religious internalization. For example, Ryan, Scott Rigby, and Kristi King examined two types of religious internalizations: (a) *introjection* and (b) *identification*.[505] Introjection is a regulation that is associated with the behaviors that are performed to avoid anxiety, guilt, shame, or low self-esteem.[506] Identification, on the other hand, represents the regulation that is associated with behaviors that are valued and performed out of personal choice.[507] Using this framework, they compared college-age evangelical youths with secular college Christians to test for differences in levels of internalization.[508] An important finding that this study highlighted was that introjection

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[504] Competence Book 179
[505] Richard M. Ryan, Scott Rigby, and Kristi King, "Two Types of Religious Internalization and Their Relations to Religious Orientations and Mental Health," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 65, no. 3 (1993): 586.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Ibid.
[508] Ibid.

tends to lead to negative psychological outcomes, while identification is associated with psychological wellbeing.[509]

This study is significant considering that Black American parenting is seen as more regulated through introjection. Renowned clinical psychologist, Diana Baumrind, highlighted this point in her famous study in which she examined the parenting styles of Black and White American families. First of all, Baumrind argues that there are four primary parenting style: (a) *authoritative*, (b) *authoritarian*, (c) *permissive*, and (d) *neglectful* parenting.[510] Baumrind found that Black American parenting style tends to be associated with being authoritarian. In other words, this parenting style undermines autonomy by being "highly controlling, punitive, harsh, and intrusive behaviors and low warmth and responsiveness directed toward the child."[511] Contrastingly, Baumrind describes authoritative parenting as rational, not overbearing, valuing autonomy, and acknowledging the child's feelings and interests; however, parents do not hover or attend to the child's every need.[512]

It is essential to touch on the impact that socioeconomic conditions have on parenting, as socioeconomically disadvantaged parents tend to be less involved in their child's learning.[513] This means they are less likely to attend open houses and parent-staff meetings, participate in

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[509] Ryan, Rigby, and King, "Two Types of Religious Internalization and Their Relations to Religious Orientations and Mental Health.", 594.
[510] Iheoma U. Iruka and Oscar Barbarin, "African American Children's Early Learning and Development," in Handbook of African American Pscyhology, ed. Helen A. Neville, Brendesha M. Tynes, and Shawn O. Utsey (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 176.
[511] Iruka and Barbarin.
[512] Diana Baumrind, "Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior," Child Development 37, no. 4 (1966): 891.
[513] Eva M. Pomerantz and Wendy S. Grolnick, "The Role of Parenting in Children's Motivation and Competence: What Underlies Facilitative Parenting?," in Handbook of Competence and Motivation: Theory and Application, ed. Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck, and David S. Yeager, Second (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 566.

school fundraisers, and volunteer at school.[514] Furthermore, socioeconomically disadvantaged parents are also less likely to assist with their children's homework.[515] This corroborates our earlier discussion about the impact of personal, interpersonal, and structural resources on identity-verification. In the case of parental involvement in their child's education, socioeconomic disadvantages have a negative impact on confirming identities as a supportive parent and an exceptional student.

Drawing from Baumrind's framework and conducting their own study, Jelani Mandara and Carolyn B. Murray propose a model that specifically focuses on Black American families. They identified three categories of Black American parenting typologies: (a) *cohesive-authoritative,* (b) *conflictive-authoritarian,* and (c) *defensive-neglectful*.[516] The cohesive-authoritative family type is characterized as having high levels of cohesion and practicing the authoritative disciplinary style.[517] This type of Black American family displays the highest level of functioning, according to Mandara and Murray.[518] The conflictive-authoritarian family describes the family entrenched in chaos and suffocated by parental control.[519] While the defensive-neglectful type of family exhibits "higher levels of defensive racial socialization and neglectful and authoritarian disciplinary practices."[520] After analyzing the various models of parenting and family typologies, cohesive-authoritative family type seems to be the most useful for this dissertation's model.

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[514] Pomerantz and Grolnick.
[515] Pomerantz and Grolnick.
[516] Jelani Mandara and Carolyn B. Murray, "Development of an Empirical Typology of African American Family Functioning," Journal of Family Psychology 16, no. 3 (2002): 324.
[517] Mandara and Murray.
[518] Mandara and Murray.
[519] Mandara and Murray.
[520] Mandara and Murray.

Interestingly, the defensive-neglectful family, according to the same study, was less likely to consistently attend church or other religious services than the other two types of families. This key finding contributes to this dissertation's argument that autonomy-supportive parenting can raise the salience of religio-racial identities by providing meaningful rationales behind required policies, listening attentively to a child's perspective, upholding rules without controlling language and behaviors, recognizing the child's individual interest and uniqueness, and holding the child accountable without shaming or demeaning the child. If these measures are actualized within households, Black American Muslim adolescent males should experience cohesion and psychological well-being.

Autonomy-Supportive Teaching

In addition to autonomy-supportive parenting, Black American Muslim adolescent males need educational environments that awaken positivity and enthusiasm towards learning. Religious teachers are key socializing agents that, depending on their approach, can raise or lower the salience of religio-racial identities in Black American Muslim adolescent males. Those who teach this target group must give them opportunities to be heard, express their creativity, and the ability to choose in the religious space.[521] Franklin, Toussaint, and Franklin assert:

> Teenage years are a time when young people question everything. This is very hard when it takes the form of rebellion against the spiritual values that we hold dear. Our fear gets in the way and we begin to worry about all of the trouble that our kids can encounter. One of the greatest tendencies during this time is to continue treating them like they are young children rather than respect their increasing ability to make some decisions on their own. We should guide their thinking and decision making in a responsible way, but should also give them an opportunity to express their opinions and views and not suppress them. Encourage them to tell you the questions (and doubts) that they are experiencing about their spiritual beliefs. Listen to them.[522]

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[521] Jennifer G. La Guardia, "Developing Who i Am: A Self-Determination Theory Approach to the Establishment of Healthy Identities," Educational Psychologist 44, no. 2 (2009): 95.
[522] Franklin, Toussaint, and Franklin 55

Similar to parents, it is important for religious teachers to provide a clear rationale for why religious lessons are important.[523] By doing so, students will value the lesson and give more of an effort to learn the lesson.[524] Furthermore, Black American Muslim adolescent males need less preaching and more open discussions in which they are given an opportunity to contribute their perspective to the dialogue. Rather than simply being demanding, autonomy-supportive socializing agents convey their expectations, values, and guidance for behavior in terms that the adolescent can assimilate.

Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, and Turner examined the different ways in which autonomy-support can be carried out in the classroom and what outcomes these different approaches yield. The RRIS adopts this model to inform autonomy-supportive teaching. These scholars conducted an eight-month-long investigation where they recorded classroom instruction from seven fifth- and sixth-grade classroom teachers. From this study, they were able to identify three contrasting features of autonomy-support, including: (a) *organizational autonomy support*, (b) *procedural autonomy support*, and (c) *cognitive autonomy support*.

Organizational autonomy-support invites students to participate in setting classroom procedures such as deciding classroom rules, selecting assignment due dates, and influencing the rate of progress toward a goal.[525] Procedural autonomy support encourages students to decide the form of media they will use to present ideas, for example, making a presentation using

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[523] Christopher P. Niemiec and Richard M. Ryan, "Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in the Classroom:Applying Self-Determination Theory to Educational Practice," Theory and Research in Education 7, no. 2 (2009): 139.
[524] Ibid.
[525] Candice R. Stefanou et al., "Supporting Autonomy in the Classroom: Ways Teachers Encourage Student Decision Making and Ownership," Educational Psychologist 39, no. 2 (2004): 101.

PowerPoint, presenting a picture or graph, and so forth.[526] The third feature, cognitive autonomy support, gives students a space to voice their perspective and lay out their arguments for or against something.[527] Furthermore, this feature encourages students to exercise their problem-solving skills.[528] From this investigation, they learned that each of these categories offers distinct forms of autonomy-support. However, cognitive autonomy seemed to be the "key ingredient without which motivation and engagement may not be maximized."[529]

In another important study, Johnmarshal Reeve presents five behaviors that autonomy-supportive teachers perform. These behaviors include: (a) nurturing inner motivational resources, (b) providing explanatory rationales, (c) using noncontrolling, information language, (d) displaying patience to allow time for self-paced learning to occur, and (e) acknowledging and accepting expressions of resistance and negative feelings.[530] Nurturing inner motivational resources describes when teachers design classroom curricula that are meaningful, challenging, goal-relevant, and piques the students' curiosity and interest.[531] Reeve gives the example of beginning a lesson with a thought-provoking question such as, "Which came first—dinosaurs or grass?"[532]

Also, providing explanatory rationales highlights the importance of articulating to students the usefulness of a task.[533] Reeves contends, "When students do not understand why the

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[526] Stefanou et al.
[527] Stefanou et al.
[528] Stefanou et al.
[529] Stefanou et al., 109
[530] Johnmarshall Reeve, "Teaching in Ways That Support Students' Autonomy," Empirical Research in Teaching and Learning: Contributions from Social Psychology 19, no. January (2011): 95-96.
[531] Reeve., 96
[532] Reeve.
[533] Reeve., 97

teacher is making a request of them, they often view the request as arbitrary, imposed, or simply meaningless busywork."[534] Using noncontrolling, informational language is described by Reeve as using language that is nonevaluative, flexible, and informational. When students, for example, display disruptive behaviors, this approach directs them to solve their own problems instead of being coerced into change.

Displaying patience to allow time for self-paced learning to occur refers to teachers showing that they value a student's internal locus of causality and understanding that students experience the process of learning differently. Patience is especially important when students are learning difficult concepts they are unfamiliar with. Lastly, acknowledging and accepting expressions of resistance and negative feelings means that teachers will most likely encounter negative affect from students in the classroom. Reeve suggests that teachers accept students' negative feelings as "potentially valid."[535] Controlling teachers, on the other hand, do not allow room for any type of resistance and negative emotions in the classroom.

In sum, these and many other studies indicate that autonomy-support is an essential element of identity development for Black American Muslim adolescent males. Autonomy-supportive religious parenting and education offer opportunities for actors to be heard, to express their creativity, and gives them the ability to choose.[536] Controlling behavior from socializing agents who do not consider the inner state of the actor poses a threat to intrinsic motivation.[537] Therefore, providing autonomy-supportive environments to Black American Muslim adolescent

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[534] Reeve.
[535] Reeve., 100
[536] Jennifer G. La Guardia "Developing Who I am: A Self-Determination Theory Approach to the Establishment of Healthy Identities" *Educational Psychologist* 44, no. 2 (April 2009): 95.
[537] Ibid.

males will improve their performance and psychological health, deepen their commitment, and raise their religio-racial identity on the hierarchy.

Autonomy and Religio-Racial Movements

Many Black Americans converted to religio-racial proto-Islamic movements seeking self-determination and collective autonomy from controlling White hegemonic religious orientations and agricultural institutions such as sharecropping and the tenant-systems of the South. By adopting these religio-racial identities, Black Americans claimed a newly found autonomy of the human body. Deviating from the normative categories of Negroes, Blacks, or colored people, the MST, for example, referred to themselves as olive-skinned Asiatic people who were the descendants of Moroccans.[538] Weisenfeld explains the case of J. Pearsall Bey:

> When J. Pearsall Bey, a North Carolina native who had migrated to Newark with his wife Missouri and their four children, registered for the draft in 1942, he found the process of providing identifying and descriptive information straightforward in many respects. Like many other men in religio-racial movements, he requested that his race be represented correctly, however, and persuaded draft registrar Carolyn Brigham to insert "Moorish" in the column that contained a list of racial options. How to characterize complexion was partly in the eye of the beholder, but, as with race, the form contained a list of descriptors from which the registrars were to choose—sallow, light, ruddy, dark, freckled, light brown, dark brown, and black. Here Brigham also bypassed the printed categories and added a new term, writing in "olive" to describe Pearsall Bey's complexion. If Brigham found it strange that he asked to be described this way, she did not indicate it on the card.[539]

Pearsall Bey's actions were far from unusual for members of these early religio-racial groups. The NOI broke from the status quo by referring to themselves as *Asiatic* and describing blackness as sacred and defiling whiteness. Likewise, the followers of Imam Waarith D. Muhammad called themselves *Bilalians*, after Prophet Muhammad's dark-skinned Ethiopian

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[538] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, Second Edi (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003).
[539] Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration*.

companion known for being the *muezzin* or prayer caller.[540] These religio-racial groups found consolation from racial terrorism through collective autonomy via controlling their identity narrative.

Both the NOI and MST members felt that although they were born and reside in the United States, "the government had no jurisdiction over them."[541] They even refused to register for the draft.[542] As a result, Elijah Muhammad and many of his followers were convicted and sent to prison for five years. Nevertheless, with their businesses and schools, the NOI and MST were determined to achieve independence from White America. Consequently, because Black American males were not given autonomy-support from America's institutions, they sought collective autonomy through religio-racial identities.

Restorative Justice and Autonomy

This dissertation suggests that socializing agents of Black American Muslim adolescent males adopt restorative justice (RJ) practices as a practical conduit for autonomy-support. Borrowing from a basic definition provided by Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood, this work defines RJ as a philosophical approach to wrongdoing that seeks to repair harm by involving the community as stakeholders in the matter, empowering the harmed, and holding the wrongdoer accountable in a way that encourages transformation.[543] RJ is a framework that was first utilized by law enforcement agencies, then later adapted for use in businesses and academic

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[540] Edward E. Curtis IV, Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 119.
[541] Weisenfeld, New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration Location 4063 of 8441.
[542] Weisenfeld., Loc. 4042 of 8441
[543] Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood, *Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools* (Philadephia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013), 19.

environments.[544] RJ is best known for its ability to empower communities to take an active role in discussing and resolving their own problems.[545]

Deepening the understanding of RJ, Zehr presents three central pillars of RJ, which include: 1) RJ focuses on harm; 2) wrongs or harms result in obligations; 3) RJ promotes participation.[546] RJ's focus on harm implies that the needs of the victims are prioritized "even when no victim has been identified or apprehended."[547] The conventional justice system, on the other hand, usually fails to provide a platform in which the victims are given the opportunity to communicate their own needs.[548] Instead, the system speaks for the victim without truly understanding the depth of the harm. Zehr's second point speaks to the obligation that the offender has in attempting to understand the depth of their harm.[549] It is also the responsibility of the offender to rewrite their wrongs and rectify the matter as much as possible. Finally, Zehr's mention of participation alludes to the significance of stakeholders being fully engaged in the process to fully enact justice.[550]

The talking circle is a key RJ practice. The tradition of the talking circle is an ancient undertaking. Many scholars trace this practice back to traditional Indigenous tribal practices.[551] Today, circles are being utilized for purposes such as workplace conflicts, sentencing in criminal cases, community dialogues, and more.[552] Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle, authors of the

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[544] Dominique Smith, Douglass Fisher, and Nancy Frey, *Better than Carrots or Sticks* (Alexandria: ASCD, 2015), Loc 57, kindle.
[545] Ibid.
[546] Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (New York: Good Books, 2015), 31.
[547] Ibid., 32.
[548] Ibid,. 33.
[549] Ibid.
[550] Ibid.
[551] Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle, *The Way of Council* (Colchester: Bramble Books, 2009), 4.
[552] Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (New York: Good Books, 2015), 64.

acclaimed text *The Way of Council*, provide four intentions of the circle, which include: 1) speaking from the heart, 2) listening from the heart, 3) being of lean expression, and 4) spontaneity. Speaking from the heart implies allowing oneself to accept the safety and trust that the circle imbues and becoming vulnerable, speaking one's honest feelings and needs. Listening from the heart means paying attention to the speaker without preparing one's response. Listening attentively can foster understanding for a person that one may view as an adversary. Being of lean expression, as Zimmerman and Coyal put it, "is an art."[553] That is to say, the speaker should get to the point and be considerate of the limited time of the circle and the opportunity that others may need to speak. The fourth intention, spontaneity, deters people from "rehearsing" what they are about to say and speak from the heart without a prepared script.[554]

In all, RJ will provide autonomy-support by giving Black American Muslim adolescent males a space to be expressive, vulnerable, critical, and creative.[555] Besides peacemaking, the talking circle can be used to discuss different subjects such as history, Islamic studies, science, and more. More importantly, RJ shares ideals with the Qur'an, and therefore its principles can be accommodated by Islam.

Autonomy-Support in the Qur'an

Prophet Ibrahim and the Star, Moon, and Sun

Prophet Ibrahīm was known in the Qur'an as a *khalīl* or intimate friend of God (Qur'an 4:125). I contend that the autonomy-support offered by God was at the foundation of the close relationship between Ibrahīm and his God. In one instance, Prophet Ibrahīm looked at the stars at

[553] Ibid., 32.
[554] Ibid., 34.
[555] Jennifer G. La Guardia "Developing Who I am: A Self-Determination Theory Approach to the Establishment of Healthy Identities" *Educational Psychologist* 44, no. 2 (April 2009): 95.

night and asked, “Is this my Lord?” When he noticed that it set (*a-fa-la*) he knew that his Lord did not set so he disqualified the star as being his Lord. (Qur’an 6:76) He then looked to the moon because it was bigger; however, after observing its change and setting, he dismissed the moon as his Lord. (Qur’an 6:77) He looked at the sun and it set like the stars and moon. (Qur’an 6:78) He concluded that his Lord does not set or change from one space to another and that there is one God who is unseen. Seemingly, Prophet Ibrahīm was permitted to try on different identities before worshipping the creator of the star, moon, and sun. God was not controlling; instead, He provided autonomy-support to Prophet Ibrahīm, optimizing his intrinsic motivation to internalize the identity of being wholly monotheistic (*Hanīf*).

Autonomy-Supportive Passages

There are several passages in the Quran that promote autonomy. The Qur’an says, for instance, “There is no compulsion in religion. Right guidance has become clearly distinct from error…” (Qur’an 2:256); “You are not a dictator over them. So, remind with the Qur’an, whoever fears My Threat.” (Qur’an 50:45); “Do you think you can force people to be believers?” (Qur’an 10:99); “So remind them! You are only a reminder. You are not in control of them.” (Qur’an 88:21-22). These passages speak to a person’s right to decide whether they want to convert to Islam. Religious conversion should take place with an I-PLOC. Furthermore, these passages directed Prophet Muhammad into offering autonomy-support to his followers while deterring him from exhibiting controlling behaviors. That is because coercive behaviors go against the framework of justice that Islam promotes.

Autonomy-Support in the *Hadīths*

Autonomy-Support and the *Hadīth* about the ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr

Yet, there are several instances in which Prophet Muhammad demonstrated autonomy-support to the companions around him. Describing one incident, ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amir mentioned that “The Messenger of God said to me: ‘Read the Qur’an in a month.’[556] I said: ‘I am able to do more than that.’[557] And I kept asking him until he said: ‘In five days.’[558] And he said: ‘Fast three days a month.’[559] I said: ‘I am able to do more than that.’[560] And ‘Observe the most beloved of fasting to Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, the fast one day and not the next.”[561] In this hadith, it appears that ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Amir has become overzealous in performing his acts of worship. Perhaps, Prophet Muhammad felt he needed to step in before the young ‘Abdullah neglected other facets of his life, such as his family and occupation. Prophet Muhammad refrained from controlling him but instead used autonomy-support to negotiate a more practical schedule for reading the Qur’an and fasting –one that allowed him to tend to his family and work to make a living.

Autonomy-Support and *Hadīth* about the Abyssinians Ceremonial Dance

Another example of autonomy-support took place on the day of *eid* (celebration at the conclusion of Ramadan) when the Abyssinians were performing a ceremonial war dance within the mosque, with their shields and spears, in front of Prophet Muhammad.[562] Umar ibn Al-Khattāb, the close companion of Prophet Muhammad, was not pleased to see their performance taking place in the mosque in front of Prophet Muhammad and thus began throwing pebbles at

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[556] “Sunan An-Nasa’i,” Sunnah.com, accessed November 22, 2020, https://sunnah.com/nasai/22/311.
[557] Ibid.
[558] Ibid.
[559] Ibid.
[560] Ibid.
[561] Ibid.
[562] “Sahih Al-Bukhari,” Sunnah.com, accessed November 22, 2020, https://sunnah.com/bukhari/56/115.

them.[563] Prophet Muhammad responded immediately, "Umar, let them be."[564] Prophet Muhammad gave Abyssinians autonomy-support by providing space for them to play and perform a celebratory expression of their culture inside of a mosque. He did not impede their performance but instead blocked others from getting in the way of their performance.

Relatedness

In addition to competence- and autonomy-support, SDT emphasizes the basic psychological need of relatedness-support. Relatedness-support refers to the feelings of being cared for by others, feeling a sense of belonging, and feelings of being an integral member of one's social group.[565] Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, and Ryan—using multilevel modeling—found that relatedness can stand on its own in contributing to an individual's wellbeing.[566] SDT's understanding of relatedness corresponds with research from attachment theory. Attachment theory contends that when caretakers are "sensitive" and "responsive" to a child, especially in times of pain and suffering, the child develops a strong attachment to that caretaker—an attachment that will extend into later life.[567] According to Carrie Furrer and Ellen Skinner, "Children with a history of secure attachments to their caregivers have been shown to function well throughout childhood and adolescence in a variety of life domains, including peer relations, school performance, and the establishment of healthy relationships with nonfamilial

[563] Ibid.
[564] Ibid.
[565] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 3.
[566] Ryan and Deci., 239
[567] Ryan and Deci.

adults."[568] Adolescents that experience secure attachments feel safe to explore and gradually progress "in activities and interaction with others."[569]

Also, several motivational models indicate "a basic need to be connected or related to others."[570] Baumeister and Leary, for instance, argue that "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships."[571] Moreover, several theorists have discussed the importance of connection, relatedness, acceptance, and sense of belonging when it comes to identity development. Christopher P. Niemiec and Ryan assert, "People tend to internalize and accept as their own the values and practices of those to whom they feel, or want to feel, connected, and from contexts in which they experience a sense of belonging."[572] Also, when examining Marcia's framework, socializing agents are especially crucial when adolescents are in the *moratorium* stage or the stage in which the adolescent is struggling to arrive at a viable identity. That is because the care, compassion, and concern socializing agents display create the conditions that help propel adolescents into *identity achievement.*[573]

Additionally, the basic need for relatedness is also compatible with the research on the concept of *social support*. This research posits that having strong ties to "trusted others" can become a significant asset when faced with an obstacle.[574] This is especially important as Black

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[568] Carrie Furrer and Ellen Skinner, "Sense of Relatedness as a Factor in Children's Academic Engagement and Performance," Journal of Educational Psychology 95, no. 1 (2003): 148.
[569] Furrer and Skinner.
[570] Ibid., 149
[571] Furrer and Skinner, "Sense of Relatedness as a Factor in Children's Academic Engagement and Performance" 149.
[572] Niemiec and Ryan, "Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness in the Classroom:Applying Self-Determination Theory to Educational Practice" 139.
[573] Marcia, "Identity In Adolescence" 111.
[574] Ibid.

Americans face more stress-inducing events due to discrimination and lack of personal, interpersonal, and structural resources.[575] Marc A. Zimmerman and colleagues conducted a longitudinal study on Black American adolescent males and found that social support plays a major role in alleviating anxiety and depression.[576] Brown indicated that Black American social support networks such as extended family, the community, the Black American churches, and the adoption of fictive kin provides "additional tools for coping, which can promote resiliency."[577] In consideration of the above, this dissertation argues that relatedness-support raises interactional and affective identity commitment by building strong attachments between Black American adolescent males and their social agents.

Parental Conditional Regard and Relatedness

Parental conditional regard (PCR) is the strategy of maintaining relatedness support as long as the child is living up to the parents' expectations.[578] Research shows that children who receive this type of relatedness-support feel rejected and resentful, even when they are receiving their parents' warmth and affection.[579] This is because PCR insinuates "that they are not be accepted for who they are but, instead, for whether they live up to their parents' demands."[580]

[575] Marc A. Zimmerman et al., "A Longitudinal Study of Stress-Buffering Effects for Urban African-American Male Adolescent Problem Behaviors and Mental Health," Journal of Community Psychology 28, no. 1 (2000): 19.
[576] Zimmerman et al., 27
[577] Danice L. Brown, "African American Resiliency: Examining Racial Socialization and Social Support as Protective Factors," Journal of Black Psychology 34, no. 1 (2008): 35.
[578] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 319.
[579] Ryan and Deci.
[580] Ryan and Deci.

PCR is also linked to feeling a sense of guilt after failure and feeling disapproved of by parents.[581]

To this end, PCR consists of two dimensions, including: (a) parental conditional negative regard (PCNR), and (b) parental conditional positive regard (PCPR). PCNR refers to the withholding of affection when the child fails to meet the parents' expectations. This strategy is punitive and highly controlling. Assor and colleagues, in their studies of ninth-grade adolescents, found that children who are recipients of this strategy lose motivation to meet their parents' expectations and leads to emotional challenges.[582] PCPR refers to dispensing more affection when the child does meet the parents' expectations.[583] Deci and Ryan describe this parenting style as "pitting the autonomy and relatedness needs against each other."[584] It is essentially like saying to the child, "give up your autonomy in order to have my relatedness." Therefore, PCPR impedes the child's autonomy by promoting controlled motivation. Children who experience PCPR may develop the habit of desiring only to perform the behaviors that impress or garner the appreciation of others.

As the antithesis to PCR, Carl Rogers proposes unconditional positive regard, which is showing acceptance, attention, and affection no matter what state the child is in.[585] Socializing agents must provide Black American Muslim adolescent males with unconditional positive regard for them to actualize their full potential. Regardless of the state that they are in,

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[581] Guy Roth et al., "The Emotional and Academic Consequences of Parental Conditional Regard: Comparing Conditional Positive Regard, Conditional Negative Regard, and Autonomy Support as Parenting Practices," Developmental Psychology 45, no. 4 (2009): 1119.
[582] Roth et al., 1119
[583] Roth et al., 1120
[584] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 319.
[585] Rogers, A Way of Being 115.

congregation members should embrace them and welcome them to the religious space. Moreover, the parents and teachers of Black American Muslim males should not require them to relinquish their autonomy before providing them with relatedness support.

Relatedness, Autonomy, and the Congregation

Relationships Motivation Theory (RMT) is the sixth mini theory of SDT that highlights the connection between autonomy and relatedness satisfaction.[586] People are born with an inherent need to connect to others, which makes relatedness intrinsic. Being controlling and not respecting a person's sense of choice can diminish the relatedness satisfaction in the relationship.[587] On the other hand, welcoming another's perspective can lead to feelings of connectedness and relatedness. Autonomy also connects to relatedness because people want to know that others love and care for them "volitionally" without being coerced or for material gain.[588] Hodgins, Koestner, Duncan, Deci, and Ryan's research concluded that higher autonomy correlated with "more positive and honest relationships in their ongoing lives."[589]

Pamela Ebstyne King transfers this notion to the religious congregation. She suggests that religious congregations must provide a context that invites young people to discover their uniqueness and, at the same time, enjoy a sense of belonging with other members. The balance of achieving both is essential for identity development. Therefore, if a young person is offered relatedness but not autonomy, identity development can be obstructed. To put it another way, if the mosque emphasizes the connectedness of the community without valuing the individual choices of its members, Black American Muslim adolescent males may not have the space to

[586] Ibid., 293
[587] Ibid.
[588] Ibid.
[589] Ibid.

explore who they are. The reverse is also true in that if the mosque offers its members the freedom to explore their individual identities without providing them a community to connect to, the religio-racial identity development can be thwarted.

Relatedness-Supportive Teaching

Researchers have long acknowledged the importance of healthy teacher-student relationships for the school adjustment of adolescents. Davidson, Gest, and Welsh posit, "Youth who experience support from teachers and peers enjoy, value, and bond with school more, are more engaged in class, have higher academic achievement, are less lonely, and feel better about themselves."[590] Students typically lose motivation for school during their transition from elementary to middle school.[591] There is evidence that supportive teachers can prevent this decline.[592] Moreover, research highlight the importance of "caring and closeness" in the relationship between the student and teacher.[593] Teachers promote relatedness-support when they make their students feel appreciated, special, and significant. More importantly, relatedness-support triggers positive emotions such as "interest and enthusiasm" to perform a task or try on an identity.[594]

Black American Muslim adolescent males need religious teachers who can build a genuine connection with them. Relatedness-support, in the context of this dissertation, is a dimension of *tarbīyah* or religious nurturing and education. The *murabbi* or religious teacher

[590] Alice J. Davidson, Scott D. Gest, and Janet A. Welsh, "Relatedness with Teachers and Peers during Early Adolescence: An Integrated Variable-Oriented and Person-Oriented Approach," Journal of School Psychology 48, no. 6 (2010): 483–84.
[591] Davidson, Gest, and Welsh., 485
[592] Davidson, Gest, and Welsh.
[593] Ibid., 150
[594] Furrer and Skinner, "Sense of Relatedness as a Factor in Children's Academic Engagement and Performance" 149.

realizes that education is a process and that a key mechanism in this process is offering the student care and a sense of importance. Without relatedness-support, the religio-racial identity cannot be verified, and it will eventually lose salience and be replaced by a more salient identity attached to another social network that cares.

Person-Centered Approach and Relatedness

American psychologist and humanistic thinker, Carl Rogers, was best known for his innovative approaches to therapy. For this dissertation, Roger's person-centered approach is seen an effective way of providing relatedness-support. Although the person-centered approach was designed for therapists, Rogers believes that his techniques can be welcomed by any domain "in which the development of the person is the goal." Rogers provides socializing agents with several tools that can be transformative in the religious environment.

The person-centered approach is premised on the following hypothesis: "Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided."[595] Like SDT, the person-centered approach establishes the importance of creating "growth-promoting" environments for adolescent identity development.[596] The person-centered approach consists of three conditions, including: (a) *genuineness*, (b) *acceptance*, and (c) *empathetic understanding*.

Genuineness, also known as realness, promotes transparency and authenticity. If the socializing agent is transparent and authentic, the environment will foster healthy development. The second condition, acceptance, refers to the attitude of the socializing agent that should be

[595] Rogers, *A Way of Being* 114.
[596] Ibid.

accepting of whatever state the person is in, whether it be sad, confused, angry, or prideful.[597] This condition also promotes what Rogers refers to as *unconditional positive regard,* which is choosing to value the person no matter what condition they are experiencing. The third condition, empathetic understanding, denotes the socializing agent enters into the person's world in order to understand the meanings of the person's experience.[598] Accomplishing this condition is impossible without using a technique called *active listening* or listening that is empathetic, nonjudgmental, and attempts to understand a person's narrative. Describing his experience with active listening, Rogers says:

> I can testify that when you are in psychological distress and someone really hears you without passing judgment on you, without trying to take responsibility for you, without trying to mold you, it feels damn good! At these times it has relaxed the tension in me. It has permitted me to bring out the frightening feelings, the guilts, the despair, the confusions that have been a part of my experience. When I have been listened to and when I have been heard, I am able to reperceive my world in a new way and to go on. It is astonishing how elements that seem insoluble become soluble when someone listens, how confusions that seem irremediable turn into relatively clear flowing streams when one is heard. I have deeply appreciated the times that I have experienced this sensitive, empathic, concentrated listening.[599]

Overall, all three of the conditions are premised on the *actualization tendency* or every living organism's natural tendency to grow and fulfill their human potential.

Religio-Racial Movement and Relatedness Support

Seemingly, relatedness-support was the reason that many Black American males were attracted to religio-racial movements. Take, for instance, the relatedness-support that Elijah Muhammad offered an imprisoned Malcolm Little before he joined the NOI—Malcolm X. In his autobiography, Malcolm X talks about the first time he met Elijah Muhammad:

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[597] Ibid., 116
[598] Ibid., 116.
[599] Ibid., 12-13

> I stared at the great man who had taken the time to write to me when I was a convict whom he knew nothing about. He was the man whom I had been told had spent years of his life in suffering and sacrifice to lead us, the black people, because he loved us so much. And then, hearing his voice, I sat leaning forward, riveted upon his words.[600]

Elijah Muhammad became a significant other for Malcolm, offering him care and attention when he was experiencing a stress-inducing event. He displayed his love by taking time out of his schedule, writing to a man he never met, and instilling in him a sense of belonging and importance. I argue that to truly be effective, a religio-racial group would require leadership that provides relatedness-support similar to what Elijah Muhammad offered Malcolm X.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

In her sociological case study of Black American males in the inner-city of Roxbury, Boston, Janet Mancini Billson presented the strategic style of the "tough guy" also known as the "troublemaker."[601] Billson gathered information from several interviews with Black American males to inform her character of Leroy, a tough guy. Billson describes, "The Tough Guy moves against people, relying on force or the threat of force to get what he wants out of interpersonal situations."[602] Billson contends that Leroy's use of violence and aggression is learned behavior that stems from his family's style of interaction. If Leroy, for example, does not meet his parents' expectations, they disapprove by using verbal and physical violence.[603] Furthermore, behind the violence and aggression, Leroy may be expressing his need for love, care, and attention.[604] Imagine if Leroy and his family learned a more effective communication style.

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[600] Malcolm X and Alex Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1964), 226.
[601] Janet Mancini Billson, Pathways to Manhood: Young Black Males Struggle for Identity, Second Edi (New York: Routledge, 2017), 90.
[602] Billson.
[603] Billson., 115
[604] Billson., 92

I argue that Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a practical model that, when infused into the religious contexts, can promote relatedness support and healthy interpersonal interactions. NVC is a model introduced by clinical psychologist, Dr. Marshal Rosenburg. He employs the word *nonviolence* following the path of Gandhi to denote the need for compassion and empathy.[605] Influenced by the works of Carl Rogers, Rosenburg originally set out to "mediate between gangs and groups during the civil rights movement."[606] Today, the model has been adopted by schools, businesses, family counseling centers, and prisons around the world.[607]

NVC endeavors to see people change in ways that contribute to well-being. The NVC can adapt to virtually any situation and cultural context. Also, known as *compassionate communication*, NVC, is a model that offers effective strategies of communication and practical applications that can be useful for building relatedness. The objective of embedding NVC within the religious environment is that it becomes a lifestyle rather than a model that is applied during conflict. Summarizing NVC, Rosenburg states, "NVC trains us to observe carefully, and to be able to specify behaviors and conditions that are affecting us. We learn to identify and clearly articulate what we are concretely wanting in any given situation."[608] This is important, especially since most people are taught to diagnose, judge, defend, withdraw, or attack. Furthermore, we are in a culture where problems are often solved using violence. NVC, as Rosenburg suggest, "fosters respect, attentiveness, and empathy and engenders a mutual desire to give from the

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[605] Marshall B. Rosenberg *Nonviolent Communication* (Encinitas: Puddle Dancer Press, 2015), Loc 336, kindle.
[606] Belinda Hopkins Restorative "Nonviolent Community" in *Restorative Theory in Practice: Insight into What Works and Why,* ed. Belinda Hopkins (Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2016), 91.
[607] Ibid., 90.
[608] Marshall B. Rosenberg *Nonviolent Communication* (Encinitas: Puddle Dancer Press, 2015), Loc. 353, kindle.

heart."[609] Therefore, NVC will be a useful framework for the RRIS model and can be implemented in religious spaces such as mosques and Muslim schools.

NVC has four main components: 1) observations, 2) feelings, 3) needs, and 4) requests. The first component implies that we observe what is taking place and communicate our observations without diagnosis, judgment, or evaluation.[610] Being able to distinguish an observation from an evaluation is critical knowing that people's ego-defense mechanisms are triggered when they sense they are being evaluated. For instance, the statement "Khadijah had a bad attitude when she came into the classroom yesterday," is more of an evaluation. First off, labeling Khadijah's attitude as bad is evaluative. Khadijah could have been sad or angry due to something that occurred before class. An example of an observation, "Yesterday in class, when I asked Khadijah to open her book, she slammed the book on the desk." This observation identifies the exact behavior that the teacher witnessed. During this moment, it is important that the listener ask clarifying questions so that they understand the "world" of the speaker.[611]

The second component, feelings, refers to the importance of properly framing and stating how we feel from what has transpired.[612] Rosenburg asserts, "Our repertoire of words for calling people names is often larger than our vocabulary of words to clearly describe our emotional states."[613] People are discouraged from being vulnerable and sharing their feelings. Furthermore, Rosenburg emphasizes the point that "what others say and do may be the stimulus, but never the cause, of our feelings."[614] We are taught how to blame and escape responsibility for our actions.

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[609] Ibid.
[610] Ibid., Loc. 400.
[611] Ibid., Loc. 896.
[612] Ibid., Loc. 400.
[613] Ibid., Loc. 869.
[614] Ibid., Loc. 1160.

Therefore, NVC teaches people how to acknowledge their own feelings, desires, needs, expectations, values, and thoughts.[615]

Regarding the third component, people rarely have been taught how to communicate their needs behind their feelings.[616] Rosenburg argues it is more effective for the speaker to connect their feelings with their needs, then present an integration of the two with the following formula: "I feel… when… because I need…" One may say, for example, "I feel aggravated when I get homework on the weekends, because I need to rest and play with my friends." This formula allows a person to communicate their feelings and needs without evaluation, judgment, and blame.

Observation, feelings, and needs are necessary requisites before a person clearly expresses their request.[617] One's request should be clear, positive, and reveal what they want.[618] If requests are expressed with ambiguous language, listeners will not know how to respond and the contention will persist.[619] More importantly, a request is not a demand and one's request should not leave people feeling criticized, judged, blamed, punished, or guilt tripped.[620] In all, these four components can potentially enhance the sense of relatedness in the religious space. I would be curious to know, what if Leroy and his family were trained in NVC?

Relatedness-Support in the Qur'an

In the 80th Qur'anic chapter titled *He Frowned* ('*Abasa*), Prophet Muhammad is chided by God for turning away and frowning in the face of 'Abdullah Ibn Umm Makhtūm, a blind man

[615] Ibid., Loc. 1187.
[616] Ibid., Loc. 1233 of 4196.
[617] Ibid., Loc. 400 of 4196.
[618] Ibid., Loc. 1490 of 4196.
[619] Ibid., Loc. 1558 of 4196.
[620] Ibid., Loc. 1643 of 4196.

who was an early convert to Islam. Ibn Umm Makhtūm approached Prophet Muhammad and said, "O Messenger of God, 'teach me what God taught you.'"[621] While Ibn Umm Makhtūm was speaking, Prophet Muhammad cut him off and frowned at him before addressing a leading tribesman from the Quraysh.[622] After rejecting Ibn Umm Makhtūm, God revealed the following passages to Prophet Muhammad:

> *(The Prophet) frowned and turned away,*
>
> *Because there came to him the blind man (interrupting).*
>
> *But what could tell thee but that perchance he might grow (in spiritual understanding)?*
>
> *Or that he might receive admonition, and the teaching might profit him?*
>
> *As to one who regards Himself as self-sufficient,*
>
> *To him dost thou attend;*
>
> *Though it is no blame to thee if he grow not (in spiritual understanding).*
>
> *But as to him who came to thee striving earnestly,*
>
> *And with fear (in his heart),*
>
> *Of him wast thou unmindful.*

These passages raise the question: If Prophet Muhammad did not have relatedness-support, could Islam have become a pervasive identity? Looking at this instance as a teacher-student scenario, teachers offer relatedness-support by making the student feel appreciated, special, and significant. If the student does not experience relatedness-support, they may lose

[621] Ibn Juzayy Al-Kalbiy, At-Tashil Li'ulum At-Tanzil 536.
[622] Ibn Juzayy Al-Kalbiy.

interest in the identity.[623] Perhaps, Ibn Umm Makhtūm's identity as a Muslim was being threatened at this moment, not receiving the support that he needed. If this is the case, these passages present an archetypal scenario for future communities, indicating the importance of providing relatedness-support to community members. Moreover, relatedness-support should not be based on a person's resources but on their eagerness towards God.

Relatedness-Support and *Shūra*

The Qur'anic concept of *shūra* or consultation is a means of communal relatedness-support. Shura involves getting the community's input when it comes to minor and major communal decisions. The Qur'an reads,

> And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harshhearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (God's) Forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him). (Qur'ān 3:159)

This passage begins by warning Prophet Muhammad about community members defecting as a consequence of not employing gentleness (*līn*). Borrowing from Carl Rogers, I see unconditional positive regard as a part of the gentleness that the Qur'an is referring to. The Qur'an's conceptualization of *shūra* is a key feature of a functioning community. *Shūra* gives people a sense of belonging and makes them feel like they play a significant role in the community.

Relatedness-Support and the Story of the *Adhān*

The genesis of the *adhān* or the call to prayer is a suitable example of *shūra* as a means for relatedness-support. The *adhān* is a melodious call to prayer that can be heard in different parts of the world up to five times a day. The *adhān* came about after the original Muslim community migrated to Madinah and their numbers began to swell so they needed a mechanism

[623] Furrer and Skinner, "Sense of Relatedness as a Factor in Children's Academic Engagement and Performance" 149.

that could mobilize the Muslim community in a group when it was time for prayer.[624] Prophet Muhammad made *shūra* with his community and some people suggested that they use a bell, others suggested a horn, and the rest suggested lighting a fire.[625] Finally, two of the companions, ‘Abdullah Ibn Zayd and ‘Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, had visions in which they saw the words for the *adhān*.[626] After approving the words to the *adhān,* Bilal ibn Rabah, a prominent African companion known for his beautiful voice, was given the task of reciting the *adhān* when it was time for prayer.[627] Relatedness-support was evident in that the suggestions of the community were sought in the decision, giving community members the feeling of specialness and feelings of being integral members of the social group. Moreover, the words of the *adhān* came from the visions of two community members and another community member was tasked with calling the *adhān* when the time for prayer came in.

Relatedness-Support and Showing Affection to Boys

Relatedness-support is also illustrated in the instance when a Bedouin man approached Prophet Muhammad and said, “You (people) kiss the boys! We don't kiss them.”[628] The Prophet said, “I cannot put mercy in your heart after God has taken it away from it.”[629] Prophet Muhammad’s approach of showing affection to the boys is in line with attachment theory, which promotes being sensitive and responsive to children.[630] This type of affection promotes healthy

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[624] “Sahih Al-Bukhari,” Sunnah.com, accessed November 23, 2020, https://sunnah.com/bukhari/10.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid.
[627] Ibid.
[628] “Sahih Al-Bukhari,” Sunnah.com, accessed November 24, 2020, https://sunnah.com/bukhari/78/29.
[629] Ibid.
[630] Ryan and Deci, *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*.

psychological development. Sadly, many cultures view the display of affection to boys as orienting them to be feminine and soft. In the case of Black American males, socializing agents withhold affection to prepare Black American boys to be physically and mentally resilient to survive the environment in which they reside.[631]

Studies show that this method of socialization becomes a barrier to present and future interpersonal relationships and psychological wellbeing. Billson asserts that when dealing with Black American males, adults should express affection openly in as many situations as possible.[632] If a student bullies and bosses his peers around at school, it is assumed that the child receives this type of treatment in the household.[633] Understanding this aggressive behavior as symptomatic should prompt socializing agents of Black American Muslim adolescent males to refrain from disciplining with a heavy hand and follow Prophet Muhammad's *sunnah* of showing affection to the boys.

Needs-Supportive Environments for the RRIS Framework

Environment of those with low religio-racial salience: When a person's religio-racial identity is at its lowest, this indicates the person's social context lacks the competence-supportive conditions that foster inherent growth tendencies. This person finds major challenges in verifying his identity because of the possibility of confirming a negative stereotype about Black Americans. This stereotype threat may cause a physiological stress response that taxes the person's working memory; the person may become more conscious about the self and their performance or they may exhaust mental resources attempting to regulate negative thoughts and

[631] Ferguson, Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity 193.
[632] Billson, Pathways to Manhood: Young Black Males Struggle for Identity 158.
[633] Billson.

feelings.[634] Besides this challenge, having low religio-racial identity means the person lacks personal, interpersonal, and structural resources, which makes it difficult to confirm religio-racial identities. Furthermore, they rely on cool pose to protect their sense of competence—a mechanism that can promote the confirmation of negative identities and antisocial behaviors. Also, the person with low religio-racial identity possesses a mindset that is fixed, and he is unwilling to put effort in the tasks that he does not feel efficacious in. Not to mention, his socializing agents offers him person-focused feedback.

Moreover, this person's environment is not autonomy-supportive so his acts are performed with an E-PLOC and he often feels like a pawn. He must endure his socializing agents adultifying him while his White counterparts' misbehavior is often overlooked and attributed to childhood innocence. His parents are controlling by employing the defensive-neglectful parenting typology. In addition, they rarely take him to the mosque to interact with people that share his faith tradition. In addition, his teachers are controlling and fail to provide organizational, procedural, and cognitive autonomy-support.

Finally, this person lacks the necessary social support of their extended family, the Black American Muslim community, and fictive kin. He feels a sense of rejection and resentment because his parents withhold their affection if he does not meet their expectations. On the other hand, they offer him relatedness-support only if he obeys their demands. He stays away from the mosque because the congregation does not allow him to be an individual so they shame him for not dressing or speaking like them. Yet, his teachers ignore him and therefore he feels invisible.

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[634] Schmader, Johns, and Forbes, "An Integrated Process Model of Stereotype Threat Effects on Performance" 15

Due to feeling incompetent, controlled, adultified, rejected, resentful, and neglected, he joined a street gang because his religio-racial identity failed to fulfill his psychological needs.

Environment of those with medium religio-racial salience: The environment associated with those with medium religio-racial salience includes the features of a controlling environment and the features of a needs-supportive environment. This person teeters between both environments and, therefore, he experiences two contrasting outcomes. When he is in a controlling environment socializing agents use strategies of control over him. In needs-supportive environments, his socializing agents show concern for his psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, when he is in a controlling environment, he experiences internal feelings of incompetence, low self-esteem, and anxiousness. When he is in a needs-supportive environment, he feels efficacious, energetic, and enthusiastic. He seems to have two distinct social networks that contradict each other.

Therefore, he confirms his religio-racial identity sometimes while other times, identity-verification is challenging. He might adopt cool pose sometimes and Muslim cool at other times. He attends public school where he faces stereotype threat being both a Black American and a Muslim. At the mosque and other places with his religio-racial community members, the threat subsides. His personal, interpersonal, and structural resources fluctuate, and he experiences both the fixed and growth mindset. Some of his socializing agents give him person-focused feedback while others give him process-focused feedback. His tasks are performed with an E-PLOC in controlling environments while in needs-supportive environments his I-PLOC is activated. When he is at public school, he is adultified and expected to be still and silent for long periods of time, regardless of whether this method of learning is effective for him. On Sundays, he learns with

needs-supportive religious teachers at his local mosque. These environments are competing with one another.

Moreover, his parents are divorced and have different parenting styles. His father employs the defensive-neglectful typology. He does not comply with his father's demand because his father uses PCNR and PCPR. Also, his mother uses the conflictive-authoritarian typology. His school teachers lack autonomy support and therefore he is not interested in school. However, he likes learning at his mosque because his *imam* uses the person-centered approach and provides explanatory rationales with his lessons, and he does not use controlling language. Which environment will prevail?

Environment of those with high religio-racial salience: A person with high religio-racial salience resides in a social context that directs him towards actualizing his true self. This person finds it easier to verify his religio-racial identity because he is equipped with the necessary resources. Regarding personal resource, he feels efficacious and confident in his abilities. As far as interpersonal resources, he has a trusting and loving relationship with those who share his religio-racial identity. Structural resources are apparent because the mosque that he attends has a salaried youth director and consistent activities for the youth group. The Muslim school he attends is Blue Ribbon certified, boasts of academic rigor, and provides several enrichment activities throughout the year.

Table 4.1. Religio-Racial Salience Chart.

	Low Religio-Racial Salience	**Medium Religio-Racial Salience**	**High Religio-Racial Salience**
Religio-Racial Self			

	Low interactional or affective commitment Commanding *nafs* Q*alb* devoid of faith "I" disregards "Me" Identity-nonverification	Medium interactional or affective commitment Reproachable *nafs* Q*alb* that accepts or rejects Shaitan. "I" is in moral struggle with "Me" Identity-verification or nonverification	Aligned with *Fitrah* High interactional or affective commitment Tranquil *nafs* *Qalb* brimming with faith Fusing of the "I" and "me" Identity-verification
Basic Psychological Needs	**Incompetence Motivation:** Stereotype Threat Lacks Resources Cool Pose Fixed-Mindset Person-Focused Feedback **Heteronomous Motivation:** Adultification Teachers Controlled Motivation Defensive-Neglectful Parenting Rarely attends religious space **Rejected and Resentful:** PCPR/PCNR	Somewhat Competence-Support Somewhat Incompetence Motivation Somewhat Autonomy-Support Somewhat Heteronomous Motivation Somewhat Relatedness-Support Somewhat Rejected and Resentful	**Competence-Support:** Muslim Cool Growth Mindset Wise Feedback Process-focused Feedback AA-RITES **Autonomy-Support:** Cohesive-Authoritative Parenting Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Frequents Religious Space RJ **Relatedness-Support:** UPR RMT

He possesses a coolness that allows him to enjoy the parts of his culture that do not compromise his religious identity. From his fashion, phraseology, and love for poetry his community welcomes his Muslim cool and does not try to make him something he is not. Also, his socializing agents instill within him a growth mindset and thus, he does not allow stereotypes about his social group to hinder him. Furthermore, his socializing agents employ wise and processed-focused feedback, which increases his intrinsic motivation to complete his role-related tasks. Recently, he participated in a Black American Rites of Passage program organized by his community, which further enhanced his efficacy.

Also, his community is autonomy-supportive and allows him to perform tasks with an I-PLOC. He designed and organized a successful family program, which made him feel like an origin. Furthermore, his family can be described with the typology, cohesive-authoritative, which implies that his parents are rational, value autonomy, and do not allow the child's feelings to override their authority.[635] Yet, his teachers employ organizational autonomy-support, procedural autonomy-support, and cognitive autonomy-support in the classroom. His Muslim

[635] Diana Baumrind, "Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior," Child Development 37, no. 4 (1966): 891.

school and mosque both use the RJ framework to solve conflicts and hold *shūra* with the community.

On top of all that, his congregation provides relatedness-support by showing affection, attention, and not ignoring the needs of the youth. His parents have always provided unconditional positive regard –never withdrawing their affection and attention. His teachers make him feel appreciated and significant when they acknowledge his work and contributions to the learning environment. Moreover, his imam applies the person-centered approach when engaging the congregation. In addition, his Muslim school trained the students and the staff in NVC reducing the number of conflicts schoolwide.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated the role of SDT's three basic psychological needs and how they contribute to the salience of the religio-racial identities of Black American Muslim adolescent males. Competence-, autonomy-, and relatedness-support are needed to motivate Black American Muslim adolescent males to form interactional and affective social ties to religio-racial identities. Each basic need was given its own section to fully elucidate its contribution to the RRIS model. The next chapter will feature another key component of the RRIS model, possible selves. We find that it is important to assess not just psychological needs that the environment must offer, but also to assess the images that Black American Muslim adolescent males use to shape their future selves.

Chapter 5: Raising the Religio-Racial Identity with Possible Selves

Introduction

In his acclaimed autobiography, Malcolm X described the first major turning point of his life, one that had profound effects on his future.[636] His eighth-grade English teacher, Mr. Ostrowski, challenged him: "Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career.[637] Have you been giving it thought?"[638] A young Malcolm replied, "Well, yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd like to be a lawyer."[639] Expressing surprise, Mr. Ostrowski emphatically said that being a lawyer is "no realistic goal for a nigger…Why don't you plan on carpentry?"[640] This incident left Malcolm dumbfounded, considering he was at the top of his class.[641] It was only then Malcolm realized Mr. Ostrowski encouraged the White students who received lower grades than him to pursue the careers of their liking.[642]

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[636] X and Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley 42.
[637] Ibid., 43
[638] Ibid.
[639] Ibid.
[640] Ibid.
[641] Ibid.
[642] Ibid., 44

This disturbing account of Malcolm and his White eighth-grade teacher illustrates the devastating impact racism has had in shaping the Black American adolescents' imagination about their future possibilities. The use of restrictive and reinforcing feedback, the pervasiveness of negative images, and a lack of role models in salient domains has and continues to undermine Black American adolescent males' formulation of *balanced possible selves*. Of particular interest in this chapter is understanding the concept of possible selves and the impact of social contexts on the self-concept and identifying interventions that address the lack of balance between plausible and avoidable possible selves.

Within this framework, this chapter is divided into five parts. First, I examine the definition of possible selves, its relationship to the self-concept, ideas emanating from similar frameworks, and possible selves as a motivator for action and inaction. Second, I examine the impact of social environments on the formulation of viable possible selves for Black American adolescent males. In this same section, I discuss the role of racial identity and feedback in promoting balance between plausible and avoidable possible selves. Third, I analyze the relationship between social comparisons with superstars and deriving possible selves. I also explore possible selves intervention programs that can be fused into the RRIS framework.

In the fourth section, I analyze passages in the Qur'an that correlate with the possible selves framework. Finally, I review the findings and expand the RRIS model to include possible selves. This chapter argues that social contexts that fosters racial identity and provide balance-oriented feedback, religio-racial role models, and possible selves intervention programs for the religio-racial context, will encourage Black American Muslim adolescent males to cognitively conceptualize highly salience religio-racial future selves that they will strive to become.

Definition of Possible Selves

Possible Selves is a concept that was first introduced in 1986 in the groundbreaking article titled *Possible Selves* written by renowned psychologists, Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius.[643] Since their seminal publication, scholars have continued to base their publications and dissertations on the concept. According to Daphna Oyserman and Stephanie Fryberg, possible selves can be described as "the selves we imagine ourselves becoming in the future, the selves we hope to become, the selves we are afraid we may become, and the selves we fully expect we will become."[644] The possible selves framework proposes that people conceptualize past and future selves in order to motivate future behaviors and as a means of evaluating the current self.[645] During adolescence, especially, individuals construct future selves by comparing themselves with salient others from their social environments, cultural and historical contexts, and models presented by the media. For example, an individual may imagine her future self as a burgeoning young athlete growing up in a household of siblings who are star athletes. Unfortunately, an individual may also construct a negative possible self from watching an abusive relative. To this end, possible selves is a type of self-knowledge that is useful for thinking about one's potential and setting future goals.[646]

Self-Concept and Possible Selves

[643] Jennifer L. Kerpelman and Curtis S. Dunkel, "Preface," in Possible Selves: Theory Research and Applications, ed. Jennifer L. Kerpelman and Curtis S. Dunkel (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2006), ix.
[644] Daphna Oyserman and Stephanie Fryberg, "The Possible Selves of Diverse Adolescents: Content and Function Across Gender, Race and National Origin," in Possible Selves: Theory Research and Applications, ed. Jennifer L. Kerpelman and Curtis S. Dunkel (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2006), 19-20.
[645] Markus and Nurius, "Possible Selves" 955.
[646] Ibid., 954

The self-concept is an individual's cognitive appraisal of their own self. The self-concept is one of the most powerful regulators of behavior and central to one's wellbeing.[647, 648] Markus and Nurius examine possible selves as the link between the "self-concept and motivation."[649] They find the self-concept is a complex and dynamic system comprised of self-schemas, that is, highly complexed structures of the self that determine which past memories will remain salient and how these memories are interpreted.[650] Going beyond the self-concept, Markus and Nurius presented the *working self-concept* as a "set of self-conceptions that are presently active in thought and memory."[651] The content accumulated by the working self-concept depends on day to day experiences in one's social contexts. As a result of these experiences one can gather a multiple array of positive and negative self-conceptions that include the "good selves, bad selves, hoped-for selves, the feared selves, the not-me selves, the ideal selves, and the ought selves."[652] This aligns with symbolic interactionism in that these selves arise from social experiences with others.

Similar Concepts

Before Markus and Nurius elaborated on the possible selves segment of the self-concept, it was alluded to in a variety of works. For instance, William James wrote about the "potential social Me," which was unrelated to the "Me" of the present and past.[653] R. Schafer discussed

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[647] Hazel Markus and Elissa Wurf, "The Dynamic Self-Concept: A Social Psychological Perspective," Annual Review of Psychology 38, no. 1 (1987): 300.
[648] Oyserman and Fryberg, "The Possible Selves of Diverse Adolescents: Content and Function Across Gender, Race and National Origin."
[649] Markus and Nurius, "Possible Selves" 954.
[650] Ibid., 955
[651] Ibid., 957
[652] Ibid.
[653] Ibid., 956.

Sigmund Freud's idea of the "ego ideal" as representing a person's "hopes and goals."[654] Carl Rogers highlighted a person's self-regard when a discrepancy arises between the "actual self" and or the "ideal self."[655] Mead likewise argued that his concept of role-taking leads to creating potential selves.[656] While, E. Tory Higgins, more recently, introduced the three domains of the self, including: (a) the *actual* self, (b) the *ideal* self, (c) the *ought* self.[657] Markus and Nurius distinguished themselves from other approaches by focusing on plausible and avoidable possible selves.

Possible Selves and Motivation

Possible selves play a major role in motivating people to achieve their goal. Markus and Nurius suggest that possible selves "function as incentives for future behavior."[658] Cognitive images, feelings, and beliefs about what is possible for one's future, motivates a person to pursue an action or withdraw from it.[659] For example, the adolescent who is complimented for his beautiful Qur'anic recitation may begin to imagine himself as a sought-after *qāri'* or Qur'an reciter, teaching students and making features on programs around the country. The possible self, in this case, becomes the incentive for the adolescent to spend long hours mastering his craft. With regard to avoidable possible selves, Cross and Markus provide the example of the "middle-

[654] Ibid.
[655] Ibid.
[656] Ibid.
[657] E. Tory Higgins, "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect" 94, no. 3 (1987): 320-21.
[658] Markus and Nurius, "Possible Selves" 955.
[659] Susan Cross and Hazel Markus, "Possible Selves Across the Life Span," Human Development 34, no. 4 (1991): 232.

aged man whose feared selves include being a heart attack victim."[660] Imagining this possible self prompts the man to begin an exercise regimen and a diet plan.[661]

Possible selves as a resource can rescue the current self from psychological pitfalls such as low self-esteem, shame, fear, anger, and despair by motivating perseverance and resilience. For example, reflecting on a possible future self can temper a threat to one's self-esteem after experiencing failure such as losing a job or relationship, flunking a test, or other occurrences.[662] Possible selves, in this case, allow a person to focus on achieving their goal instead of the pain absorbed while pursuing congruency with one's possibilities. A business owner who loses his restaurant during a recession is motivated to rebuild his busines by imagining a possible mogul self.

Erin J. Strahan and Anne E. Wilson determined that not all possible selves have equal motivating capacities.[663] In a study comparing psychologically close possible selves and psychologically distant possible selves, they found "a future possible self which feels psychologically close is more motivating than a future possible self which feels psychologically distant."[664] A graduation in the near future, for example, may yield more effort in present academic studies from the student than a graduation in the distant future.[665] Thus, possible selves are motivators, prompting action or inaction, especially when they are psychologically close.

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[660] Cross and Markus.
[661] Ibid.
[662] Markus and Nurius, "Possible Selves" 963.
[663] Erin L. Strahan and Anne E. Wilson, "Temporal Comparisons, Identity, and Motivation: The Relation Between Past, Present, and Possible Future Selves," in Possible Selves: Theory Research and Applications, ed. Curtis Dunkel and Jennifer Kerpelman (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2006), 13.
[664] Ibid.
[665] Strahan and Wilson.

For Black American Muslim adolescent males, possible selves can motivate religio-racial role-related behaviors in the present. Socializing agents play an important role in providing an environment that promotes healthy possible selves. The rituals of prayer, fasting, alms, and the annual pilgrimage to Mecca require possible selves that see these acts as means to a successful future self. Furthermore, possible selves can instill the spiritual resilience in Black American Muslim adolescence selves needed to overcome urges to commit acts that contradict the religio-racial identity. In all, possible selves are motivators for Black American Muslim adolescent males to invoke religio-racial identities until their identities are at the peak of the hierarchy.

A Study on Possible Selves and Delinquency

Oyserman and Markus studied 238 youths between 13 and 16 years of age who were delinquent and nondelinquent.[666] Out of the 238 youths, 175 were Black and 63 were White.[667] An open-ended self-concept format was used to elicit hoped-for, expected, and feared possible selves from each respondent.[668] Interestingly, they found the most officially delinquent groups had the highest self-esteem scores.[669] Although, some may argue that this is "defensive self-esteem."[670] While nondelinquent groups had generated expected possible selves of "having a job," the delinquent groups generated expected possible selves that included negative categories such as: "junkie," "depressed," "alone," "flunking out of school," "pusher," and "criminal."[671] In addition, the delinquent groups' feared possible selves involved crime or drugs, and their responses regarding their hoped-for selves had few mentions of school and school-related

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[666] Daphna Oyserman and Hazel Rose Markus, "Possible Selves and Delinquency," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 59, no. 1 (1990): 112.
[667] Ibid., 114
[668] Oyserman and Markus, "Possible Selves and Delinquency" 115.
[669] Ibid., 123
[670] Ibid.
[671] Ibid., 117

activities.[672] They also discovered many in the delinquent groups lacked balance between their expected and feared possible selves.[673] That is, their expected possible selves did not include categories that would help them cognitively counter their feared possible selves. Overall, these findings are significant because they indicate delinquent behavior is linked to the conceptions, images, and feelings adolescents have about their potential and their future.[674]

Black American Adolescent Males and Possible Selves

In his hit song titled "Things Done Changed," the late rapper Notorious BIG verbalized, "If I wasn't in the rap game/I'd probably have a ki [kilogram of cocaine], knee-deep in the crack game/because the streets is a short stop/Either you're slingin' crack rock or you got a wicked jump shot/Shit, it's hard being young from the slums." His lyrics highlight the drug dealer, rapper, and athlete as the salient figures that Black American adolescent males growing up in America's inner-cities derive their possible selves from. This substantiates the research claiming a person's social context plays a critical role in determining what kinds of possible selves they will imagine.[675] Black American adolescent males are tasked with deriving plausible possible selves amidst adverse conditions created by racism and lack of opportunity.[676] Oyserman and Fryberg assert that,

> In inner city contexts with high unemployment rates, it may be hard to instantiate specific and detailed occupational possible selves and media images of occupational possible selves for one's racial group may be equally limiting, leaving the implied message that

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[672] Ibid., 122
[673] Ibid.
[674] Ibid., 123
[675] Oyserman and Fryberg, "The Possible Selves of Diverse Adolescents: Content and Function Across Gender, Race and National Origin" 18.
[676] Oyserman, Ager, and Gant, "A Socially Contextualized Model of African American Idenity: Possible Selves and School Persistence."

> one cannot be both a member of one's racial group and also a member of various professions.[677]

All of this indicates that a person's social context is a major determinant of whether a possible self should be "positively or negatively valued."[678]

These unpropitious social environments lead to an imbalance between plausible and avoidable possible selves. Oyserman and Eli Saltz define *balance* as referring to "the construal of both positive expectations and possibilities to be avoided in the same domain."[679] Adolescents, for instance, who lack balanced possible selves perform delinquent behaviors without considering the negative possibilities.[680] Conversely, youth who possess balanced possible selves are aware of the possible negative consequences of not meeting their behavioral objectives.[681] An adolescent, lacking balance, who is motivated by the possibilities of looking cool or tough, may bully others or vandalize property and post his behavior on social media without ever considering the possibility of losing his life or freedom. Conversely, a person with balanced possible selves may strive to achieve his architect possible self and at the same time avoid his negative school dropout possible self.

According to Oyserman and Kathy Harrison, balance is likelier in Black American male students with a positive racial identity that emphasizes collectivism and interconnection.[682]

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[677] Oyserman and Fryberg, "The Possible Selves of Diverse Adolescents: Content and Function Across Gender, Race and National Origin" 22.
[678] Oyserman and Fryberg., 21
[679] Daphna Oyserman and Eli Saltz, "Competence, Delinquency, and Attempts to Attain Possible Selves," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 65, no. 2 (1993): 360.
[680] Ibid.
[681] Ibid.
[682] Daphna Oyserman and K. Harrison, "Implications of Cultural Context: African American Identity and Possible Selves," in Prejudice: The Target's Perspective, ed. Janet K. Swim and Charles Stangor (San Diego: Academic Press, 1998), 286.

Oyserman and her colleagues identify at least three aspects of racial identity that have been shown to foster balance in possible selves, especially with regard to the academic domain: (a) awareness of racism, (b) a sense of connectedness, and (c) embedded achievement.[683] Black American adolescent males should have an awareness of racism and how it plays out in everyday life.[684] They should also be given the tools to overcome the obstacles that racism may create.[685] However, racial awareness alone is not enough to foster balance. Black American adolescent males must also have a strong connection to their own racial group. Feeling a sense of membership to one's group promotes psychological well-being.[686] Eccles and colleagues found that Black American adolescents' identification with their racial group could reduce the negative impact of racism.[687]

The third component, that of embedded achievement, connects one's personal achievements with racial identity.[688] Black Americans, that is, should view achievement, in a variety of domains, as a major part of being a Black American. In the academic domain, for example, Black American adolescent males must see and interact with other Black American males who have high achievements in education.

Complimenting racial identity, the feedback that socializing agents provide to adolescents about a particular domain has a considerable impact on the balanced construction of plausible and avoidable possible selves. Oyserman and Saltz explain,

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[683] Ibid.
[684] Ibid.
[685] Ibid.
[686] Ibid.
[687] Eccles, Wong, and Peck, "Ethnicity as a Social Context for the Development of African-American Adolescents" 422.
[688] Ibid.

> Given the social nature of the self, it is likely that only those selves that others validate as possible will become part of one's identity. In this regard, the plausibility of particular possible selves or desired identities may be thought of as the outcome of a series of interpersonal interactions in which these selves are negotiated. Thus, a "smart, do well in school" possible self cannot be sustained by a particular grade in school; rather, it is the result of a series of interactions with teachers, classmates, and parents over time in which information about the individual's past, current, and likely future academic achievements is symbolized by grades, among other things. Because future identity requires some current social validation, adolescents must learn to skillfully negotiate with the important others in their social environment. It is through the eyes of their parents, peers, and teachers that adolescents strive to build a plausible independent adult self. These others, partners in the identity negotiation process, provide feedback about the self's successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses—past, current, and likely in the future.[689]

Thus, possible selves that are not validated by socializing agents will most likely not become part of one's identity.[690] Ogbu, for example, argued that generations of Black American children were taught that pursuing education is "acting White."[691] This type of negative feedback leads to an ambivalent attitude toward education and becomes a barrier to imagining a possible self as a successful student.

In sum, adolescents' social contexts determine the quality of their possible selves. Having a healthy identification with one's racial group promotes balanced possible selves. Furthermore,

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[689] Oyserman and Saltz, "Competence, Delinquency, and Attempts to Attain Possible Selves" 361.
[690] Ibid.
[691] Fordham and Ogbu, "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the ' Burden of ' Acting White'' 178.

Black American Muslim adolescent males need socializing agents that provide the feedback necessary to validate positive possible selves. Socializing agents must also clearly identify negative avoidable possible selves, the reason these selves should be avoided, and how to avoid these selves. More importantly, Black American Muslim adolescent males must be exposed to other successful Black American males, which leads us to our next section.

Deriving Possible Selves from Social Comparisons with "Superstars"

Penelope Lockwood and Ziva Kunda define the term *superstar* as an individual of "outstanding achievement" who serves as a role model to others, inspiring and motivating them to do their best in that domain.[692] Markus and Nurius sparingly discussed the presumed impact that the 1984 Olympic games had on young runners and their formulation of possible selves.[693] In those Olympic games, Carl Lewis won four gold medals by constructing a possible self, using the career of Jesse Owens.[694] Considering Lewis's 1984 performance and the rest of his storied career, many aspiring runners, perhaps, used his influence to construct possible selves like he used Jesse Owens.

Superstars such as Lewis and Owens are looked to as role models that give form to the cognitive aspirations of young athletes. Considering Lockwood and Kunda's definition of superstar, it is important to note that the idea of superstar is not restricted to pervasive public figures like Lewis and Owens, instead, a superstar can be a role model who has reached exceptional heights in a relevant domain. For example, an accomplished chef may be invited to

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[692] Penelope Lockwood and Ziva Kunda, "Superstars and Me: Predicting the Impact of Role Models on the Self," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 73, no. 1 (1997): 91.
[693] Markus and Nurius, "Possible Selves" 955.
[694] Markus and Nurius.

speak to culinary arts students to inspire the construction of successful future selves.[695] Unfortunately, Black American adolescent males tend to reside in social contexts that lack superstars in educational and occupational domains.[696]

To this end, social comparison is a key construct in the process of deriving possible selves from role models. Pioneering social comparison theorist, Leon Festinger, in his groundbreaking work, argued that people evaluate their ideas and behaviors by comparing themselves to others within their social network.[697] Thomas Ashby Wills presented the downward comparison theory in which he argued that a person experiencing negative feelings of distress and misfortune can enhance their self-perception and confidence through comparison with others who are less fortunate.[698] Comparing oneself to a superstar requires an upward gaze, which comes with its risks. Lockwood and Kunda warned that comparing oneself to a more successful other can lead to self-deflation and demoralization if one believes he cannot attain comparable success. However, if the individual believes they can achieve similar success as the superstar, they will be inspired by imagining a successful future and will experience a positive impact on their subjective wellbeing.

Also important in this discussion are the conditions that promote the social comparison between the self and others. The Self-Evaluation Maintenance (SEM) model maintains that individuals are likelier to compare themselves to close others, those they are similar to in

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[695] Penelope Lockwood and Ziva Kunda, "Superstars and Me: Predicting the Impact of Role Models on the Self," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 73, no. 1 (1997): 93.
[696] Oyserman, Ager, and Gant, "A Socially Contextualized Model of African American Idenity: Possible Selves and School Persistence" 1217.
[697] Leon Festinger, "A Theory of Social Comparison Processes," Human Relations 7, no. 2 (1954): 121.
[698] Thomas A. Wills, "Downward Comparison Principles in Social Psychology," Psychological Bulletin 90, no. 2 (1981): 245.

dimensions such as gender, family, race, location, age, or personality traits.[699] That is, the Black American professor is more apt to compare himself with the Black American superstar professor than the White American superstar professor. Lockwood and Kunda highlight domain self-relevance as another factor that influences a person's impulse to compare themself to others. This indicates the optometrist is more likely to compare himself to another superstar optometrist than a superstar accountant. And lastly, Lockwood and Kunda assert that a person is likelier to compare themselves to a superstar whose success is attainable.[700] If a superstar's accomplishments are unattainable for a less fortunate person, a social comparison will result in a person feeling demoralized.[701] This is especially the case for the person who believes that their abilities are fixed.

To this end, the results of performing an upward social comparison on a superstar depends on a person's mindset.[702] That means conducting an upward social comparison on a star while using a fixed-performance frame can lead to demoralization and illbeing,[703] while the same type of comparison on a superstar accompanied by a growth mindset fosters psychological wellbeing and the construction of superstar possible selves.[704] Bringing identity theory into the conversation, we find that deriving possible selves from superstars can temper the negative emotions that arise from identity non-verification. That is, if a person finds their religio-racial

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[699] Abraham Tesser, Murray Millar, and Janet Moore, "Some Affective Consequences of Social Comparison and Reflection Processes: The Pain and Pleasure of Being Close," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 54, no. 1 (1988): 50.
[700] Lockwood and Kunda, "Superstars and Me: Predicting the Impact of Role Models on the Self" 93.
[701] Ibid.
[702] Markus Kemmelmeier and Daphna Oyserman, "The Ups and Downs of Thinking about a Successful Other: Self-Construals and the Consequences of Social Comparisons," European Journal of Social Psychology 31, no. 3 (2001): 313.
[703] Ibid.
[704] Ibid.

identity low on the salience hierarchy, gazing upon role models can help a person construct a possible future self with a salient religio-racial identity.

Spiritual Modeling

Using superstars as role models is only one means of deriving possible selves. Doug Oman and Carl E. Thoresen proposed the term spiritual modeling to signify transmitting a spiritual tradition through formal and informal observation of an exemplar of how to live a "spiritually meaningful life."[705] The central component of spiritual modeling is *observational spiritual learning* or learning "spiritually relevant skills or behaviors" through observation.[706] For instance, the founders of the world's great religious traditions, including Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and others, have left behind spiritual examples that continue to be observed. Written abstract principles and a collection of rules are simply not enough to motivate people to live a religious lifestyle. Substantial spiritual growth and faith development take place by observing and imitating those who embody the principles and rules.

Oman and Thoresen borrow from Bandura to formulate their four main mechanisms of observational spiritual learning, to capture the systematic process of spiritual growth through a spiritual model: (a) *attention*, (b) *retention*, (c) *reproduction*, and (d) *motivation*.[707] To overcome moments where people suffer from attention deficit, major religious traditions include rituals and practices that draw one's attention to the spiritual exemplar.[708] The biographical events and teaching of the spiritual exemplars are continuously mentioned, which brings in the mechanism of retention. *Reproduction* addresses the virtuous acts such as charity, mercy, truth, forgiveness,

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[705] Doug Oman and Carl E. Thoresen, "Invited Essay: 'Spiritual Modeling: A Key to Spiritual and Religious Growth?,'" International Journal of Phytoremediation 21, no. 1 (2003): 149.
[706] Ibid., 150
[707] Ibid., 154
[708] Ibid.

humility, and more. These behaviors are enacted by spiritual exemplars and positive feedback is provided to support the behaviors. Lastly, people are motivated by the repeated personal testimonies of religious figures who claim higher spiritual experiences (i.e., great peace, happiness, etc.) as consequences of adhering to religious practices. Adherents of religion are usually not conscious of these mechanisms, instead, they pick them up through repeated and consistent exposure.

Furthermore, Oman and Thoresen identify different categories of spiritual models from religious traditions, including: (a) fellow congregants that provide informal conversation and fellowship, (b) spiritual director who provides a structured relationship, (c) a mystic that appears in religious literature, (d) scriptural figures for meditative reading, and (e) scriptural figures for verbal rituals. These categories will be slightly modified to reflect the religio-racial identity and the possible selves framework and placed in the RRIS model.

Gleaning from the frameworks of Lockwood and Kunda, and Oman and Thoresen, the term *superstar* is defined as an individual, dead or living, of outstanding religious achievement that can serve as a role model to Black American Muslim adolescent males, inspiring and encourage them to realign with their *fitrah*, actualize their full potential, and discover their true selves. Adding to this definition, Prophet Muhammad said, "Shall I not tell you about the best of you?" They (listeners) said, "Of course." The Prophet said, "Those who if they are seen, they remind you of God…"[709] Drawing from this *hadīth*, superstars in the religio-racial environment should remind Black American Muslim adolescent males of God through the performance of behaviors such as prayer, giving charity and showing compassion to the less fortunate, forgiving

[709] "Al-Bukhari," Daily Hadith Online, accessed December 17, 2020, https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2013/11/30/best-inspire-dhikr-allah/.

others, speaking truth to power, and eschewing all types of antisocial behaviors that do not align with the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

With this in mind, the Religio-Racial Spiritual Observational Learning table features 5 types of models for Black American Muslim adolescent males: (a) congregational superstar, (b) religious director superstar, (c) historical luminary superstar, (d) prophetic superstar, and (e) scriptural superstar. Black American Muslim adolescent males need congregational superstars that they can emulate and formulate plausible possible selves. In line with the SEM model, the congregational superstars should be an accomplished Black American male. The Black American male will be more likely to do a social comparison with role models from their race and locality. Correlating with Lockwood and Kunda's and their emphasis on domain self-relevance, the congregational superstar should share the same religio-racial identity with the Black American Muslim adolescent male.

In addition, Black American Muslim adolescent males need a Black American religious director superstar that embodies and not just preaches the principles in the Qur'an and the prophetic example. Black life in America can bring about fear of the future and despair about the past. The Black mosque has always been a place of hope-building and every Friday mosque-goers gather in the mosque to hear a message of hope from the religious director (i.e., imam, shaykh, etc.). Black Americans joined the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam in search of hope. The congregants look to the religious director to be a model of resilience. Black American Muslim adolescent males derive possible leader selves, husband selves, father selves, disciplined selves, and religio-racial selves from observing the religious director superstar.

Table 5.1. Religio-Racial Observational Learning.

Model	*Informational Medium*	*Description of Observational Spiritual Learning*
Congregational Superstar	Informal conversation and fellowship	A man struggling to balance his identities as a husband, father, employee, and Muslim spends time with a Mosque elder every Friday and receives advice on how to balance all his responsibilities. The man constructed a possible responsible self by observing the elder.
Religious Director	Structured relationship	A young man attends the Friday prayer every week at the mosque. After the sermon, he spends time asking the religious director questions about life. This structured relationship with the religious director helped the young man construct a possible imam self.
Historical	Reading	A young man read about the story of Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Mbacke's non-violent struggle against colonial forces and his propagation of Islam by opening Qur'an schools. The young man then created a possible scholarly peaceful self.
Prophetic Superstar	Prophetic narratives and sayings	A young man read about Prophet Muhammad's kind behavior toward his wife 'Aisha. He then read the *hadith* that says, "The best man is the one who is best with his family." After this, the young man constructed a possible married self.
Scriptural Superstar	Qur'anic Narratives	A man consistently encountered the Qur'anic passages in which Luqman gave advice to his son. Reading the exegesis of the passages, he learned that Luqman was an African man. The man took Luqman as a scriptural superstar and formulated a possible good father self.

Additionally, Black American Muslim males also need historical luminary superstars like Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba, Malcolm X, Imam Waarith D. Muhammad, and others whom they can read about and construct possible selves. Naim Akbar asserts,

> We must educate, then we must celebrate. We must celebrate African men. Let's not have one holiday, let's have every day a holiday. Let's celebrate our heroes every day. Let everybody know that these are important people. I'm going to sing about what Kind did, what Malcolm did, what Booker T. did, what Elijah did, what Chiekh Anta Diop did,

> what Marcus Garvey did. I'm going to have a celebration every day because of the reality of what our heroes have accomplished.[710]

History is a powerful resource for formulating possible selves.

Black American Muslim males can also construct possible selves by learning about the *sīra* or biography of Prophet Muhammad and studying his sayings. His narratives and sayings cover a wide array of topics that will be useful for Black American Muslim adolescent males. The *sīra* of Prophet Muhammad promotes good treatment of others, animals, as well as the environment. Additionally, the *sīra* is a window into the Prophet's homelife with his wives, children, and closest friends.

Yet, Black American Muslim males can formulate possible selves reading about the lives of the scriptural superstars in the Qur'an. Scriptural superstars such as Moses committed a grave mistake which led to a swift dispersal from his hometown. Because of this incident, Moses had to overcome the challenges of being homeless, hungry, and a fugitive from the law. This narrative teaches resilience and overcoming hardship through faith and reliance on God. Deriving possible selves from scriptural superstar will raise the salience of the religio-racial identity on the hierarchy.

To these ends, the model superstars featured on the religio-racial observational table promote balanced possible selves. We learned that many inner-city social environments influence the construction of negative possible selves. Possessing these categories of role models along with a growth mindset will help Black American Muslim adolescent males avert an upward social comparison that leads to self-deflation. In all, the Black mosque must provide

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[710] Naim Akbar, Visions for Black Men (Tallahassee: Mind Productions & Associates, Inc., 2013), 85.

religio-racial versions of Jesse Owens and Carl Lewis to bring in the victory of salient religo-racial identities.

Possible Selves Intervention Programs

School-to-Jobs Program

In addition to the religio-racial observational learning table, I find two possible selves intervention programs that will be useful for the RRIS model, including the School-to-Jobs program and the Possible Selves Program. Daphna Oyserman, Kathy Terry, and Deborah Bybee designed the School-to-Jobs program, a nine-week after-school program based on the possible selves framework.[711] Their objective was to connect school achievement to the construction of possible selves. They focused the program on low-income inner-city Black American students in their last year of middle school. They found that by the end of the year these youths reported positive gains such as increased bonding in school, more interest to succeed in school, balance possible selves, better attendance, and less trouble for the boys in the cohort. This was an ideal group to research, especially since they are at the age that adolescents began formulating future selves.[712] Furthermore, Black American adolescent youth are at risk because many of them lack plausible role models.[713]

They conducted a weekly after-school program for a nine-week period and each session went for 90 minutes.[714] They divided the program into nine sessions. The first session consisted of *creating a group* in which facilitators and participants introduced themselves, developed

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[711] Daphna Oyserman, Kathy Terry, and Deborah Bybee, "A Possible Selves Intervention to Enhance School Involvment," Journal of Adolescence 25 (2002): 313.
[712] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee., 315
[713] Ibid.
[714] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee, "A Possible Selves Intervention to Enhance School Involvment" 313.

program rules, and conducted group building activities.[715] The second session, *adult images*, consisted of participant choosing pictures of adults working, involved with family, doing community service, or doing hobbies.[716] They described the image and related it to their future selves.[717] The session called *timelines* allowed participants to constructed personal timelines as far into the future as they could.[718] They also considered possible forks in the road and roadblocks and place them on their timeline.[719] For the forth session, *possible selves and strategies boards*, participants mapped out their next year and adult possible selves using a poster board and colored stickers.[720] They also discuss the strategies that they are now using to reach their goal and the obstacles in their way.[721]

Now the program shifts from individual into group work. *Solving everyday problems I* is a session conducted in small groups.[722] The participants are tasked with developing strategies to solve school related problems such as getting a bad grade in math or being overwhelmed with schoolwork.[723] *Solving everyday problems II* is similar to the previous session, however, the small groups discussed the high school graduation requirements and prerequisites for college.[724] The participants also correlated this discussion with the information in their adult visions, timelines, and strategy boards.[725] *Wrapping up, moving forward* is a session in which the participants recap what they have learned in the program and what they liked and dislike about

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[715] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee., 317
[716] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[717] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[718] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee., 318
[719] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[720] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[721] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[722] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[723] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[724] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[725] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.

the program.[726] In the *Building an alliance and developing communication skills* session, parents and the participants come together and discuss the goals of the participants for the following year.[727] The focus of this session is active listening, effective communication, and connecting the parents with the youth.[728] The last session is *jobs, careers, and informational interviewing*. Parents and youth work together to identify pathways to employment.[729] They also learn about informational interviewing and how this strategy can be used to contact people who have careers that they are interested in.[730]

Possible Selves Program

The second intervention model, the *Possible Selves program*, was designed by Michael F. Hock, Donald D. Deshler, and Jean B. Schumaker. They designed this program to help elementary through post-secondary students with personal motivation in academics.[731] Younger children, they found, entered the school environment full of enthusiasm and eager to learn.[732] However, after repeated failure that enthusiasm and eagerness begins to wane by the upper elementary grades.[733] Teachers find themselves unable to rekindle the love for learning and having to endure students' negative emotions towards schoolwork.[734] The possible selves frameworks is important because students who have a possible self that clearly defines what they

[726] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[727] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee., 318-19
[728] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee., 319
[729] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[730] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[731] Oyserman, Terry, and Bybee.
[732] Michael F. Hock, Donald D. Deshler, and Jean B. Schumaker, "Enhancing Student Motivation Through the Pursuit of Possible Selves," in Possible Selves: Theory Research and Applications, ed. Jennifer L. Kerpelman and Curtis S. Dunkel (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2006), 205-6.
[733] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 206
[734] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.

want to be like in their future will more likely put forth the effort that reflects their future goals.[735] Furthermore, a student who has thought about a possible self that is jobless and living in a shelter will more likely put forth effort in avoiding that possible self.[736] Reflecting on both scenarios indicates that possible selves is the necessary link between the self-concept and one's motivation to work hard.[737]

The Possible Selves Program helps students think about their goal and design carefully considered steps towards these goals. A possible selves tree is used as a metaphor to represent the possible selves of the students in the program. The students are charged with nurturing and making sure their tree develops into "a strong, well-balanced, beautiful tree."[738] The tree allows the student to thoroughly examine their hoped for, expected, and feared selves. When students know where they are going in life, they are more apt to put forth the necessary effort to complete their goals.

Complementing the possible selves tree, there are six primary components in the possible selves program, including: (a) *discovering*, (b) *thinking*, (c) *sketching*, (d) *reflecting*, (e) *growing*, and (f) *performing*.[739] During the discovering phase, the goal is for students to identity and share their strengths and interests.[740] A key here is that students are more willing to share information about the activities that interest them the most.[741] For example, a student's interest in sports is apparent if they enthusiastically talk about it.

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[735] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 209
[736] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[737] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 210
[738] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 211
[739] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 211-14
[740] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 211-12
[741] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.

The second component, thinking, prepares the student to answer the question, "Who am I?"[742] The counselor or teacher interviews the student asking them questions that pertain to their identities. In addition, they are queried about their hopes, fears, and expectations that are associated with each of their identities. Some of the questions include: "What statements or words best describe you as a learner? What do you hope to achieve as a learner? What do you fear as a learner?"[743]

While during the third phase, sketching, students draw a possible selves tree and transfer the information that has been collected during the interview to the tree.[744] The limbs of the tree will represent students' strength areas (i.e., learner, worker, etc.).[745] Students will place their hoped-for and expected possible selves on the branches.[746] The feared possible selves will be represented by conditions such as lightning, poison, termites, and so forth.[747] Thereafter, a plan will be designed on how the student will care for and nurture the tree.

The reflecting stage requires the student to "evaluate the condition of his or her tree and set goal for the future."[748] The student is given one-on-one time with a counselor to discuss the parts of their tree. The hope is that the student answers the question, "What can I be?"[749] Yet, the fifth component, growing, gives the student and opportunity to answer the question, "How do I get there?"[750] In other words, they will map out a plan to reach their destination. If, for example,

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[742] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 212
[743] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[744] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 212-13
[745] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 213
[746] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[747] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[748] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker., 214
[749] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[750] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.

they discover during the reflecting phase that their hope for a career is to be an architect, that student and teacher can now identity short and long-term goals to reach the goal.

In the final component, performing, the tree and action plan are reviewed frequently to make sure the student stays on track.[751] The student will make sure that he is completing the task and that new goals are added to ensure the growth of the tree.[752] On top of that, when the student accomplishes a goal, it will be celebrated.[753] If the student stays focused, he will feel efficacious to accomplish the next set of goals.

Possible Selves Intervention Model for Black American Muslim Adolescent Males

Although both intervention models are intended for the academic domain, they can be useful for the religio-racial environment as well. I argue that religious teachers including imams, youth leaders, weekend-school teachers, and Muslim private school teachers can use these models to promote possible selves motivation in the religio-racial environment. For the religio-racial environment, I suggest fusing both models to maximize the effectiveness of the intervention. The school-to-jobs model clearly elucidates nine sessions and most of the activities take place in small groups. While the possible selves program includes more one-on-one time with a counselor. Black American Muslim adolescent males need one-on-one time with a counselor who can actively listen to them and help them navigate this racialized word. They also need to work in groups where they can learn to empathize and build alliances with others in their community.

Moreover, regarding the second model, the possible selves tree stood out to me. The tree is a powerful symbol and I will use it as a main feature for this dissertation's possible selves

[751] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[752] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.
[753] Hock, Deshler, and Schumaker.

intervention model. The possible selves tree can be justified with the following prophetic narrative:

> God's Messenger said, "Amongst the trees, there is a tree, the leaves of which do not fall and is like a Muslim. Tell me the name of that tree." Everybody started thinking about the trees of the desert areas. And I thought of the date-palm tree but felt shy to answer the others then asked, "What is that tree, O Allah's Messenger?" He replied, "It is the date-palm tree."[754]

In line with this *hadīth*, the palm tree will be used in this dissertation's possible selves intervention model. Also, constructing timelines and strategy board are also key components that can be useful for the RRIS model. I especially appreciated that the discussion of forks in the road and roadblocks are highlighted as important features in both intervention models. Yet, I enjoyed that the parents participated in the first intervention model because the parents play a critical role in helping their children construct positive possible selves. I will definitely include the parents in the possible selves intervention model for Black American Muslim adolescent males.

Imam W.D. Muhammad and the Bilalians

In February 1975, charismatic leader of the NOI, Elijah Muhammad, died and his son, Wallace D. Muhammad (before he changed his name) became the new supreme minister. During his early years in office, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad made several sweeping reforms with the goal of bringing his community more in line with the mainstream body of *Sunni* Muslims. One reform included introducing the new NOI to a famous dark-skinned African companion of Prophet Muhammad named Bilal Ibn Rabah. Bilal was an ex-slave who joined the early group of

[754] "Sahih Al-Bukhari," Sunnah.com, accessed March 28, 2021, https://sunnah.com/bukhari:62.

Muslims and eventually rose to become the first public announcer for prayer in Islam as well as Prophet Muhammad's private secretary.

Imam Warith Deen Muhammad felt that Bilal was a relevant historical superstar that Black Americans could relate to and derive possible religio-racial selves from. Therefore, he chose the name Bilalian as the identifying title for Black Muslims, replacing, "black" and "African American."[755] Imam W.D. Muhammad wrote, "We believe that the term "Bilal" identifies us with a person in history. We know that the name Bilal itself really refers to the soul; and Bilal was a person who was highly spiritual… So this inner sensitivity is what we identify with in Bilal."[756] He even changed the name of the NOI's newspaper from *Muhammad Speaks* to the *Bilalian News*.

Imam W.D. Muhammad's unconventional thinking attracted criticism from his new *Sunni* immigrant Muslim allies which prompted him to minimize the usage of that designation.[757] I contend that if his allies were aware of the possible selves framework, they might have encouraged the Imam to continue the usage of Bilalian. Nevertheless, due to Imam Muhammad's efforts, Bilal ibn Rabah became a historical superstar that Black Americans adopted as a role model. Imam Muhammad's decision indicated how important it is for Black Americans to have Muslim historical and contemporary role models that are relevant and psychologically close to them.

Plausible and Avoidable Possible Selves in the Qur'an

In the Quran, God establishes Prophet Muhammad as the ideal model for deriving a successful possible self in the following passage: "There has certainly been for you in the

[755] Aminah Beverly McCloud, African American Islam (New York: Routledge, 1995), 75.
[756] Ibid., 76
[757] Ibid.

Messenger of Allah an excellent model (*uswah al-hasana*) for anyone whose hope is in God and the Last Day and (who) remembers God often." (Qur'an 33:21) The word used in this passage to denote pattern, example, or model is *uswah*. This word is also used for Prophet Abraham and his followers. Moreover, in *Sura* 16:36 the Qur'an mentions that a messenger was sent to every nation. From a Qur'anic standpoint, the prophets, messengers, and righteous people encourage the development of positive possible selves.

More importantly, the Qur'an provides a balance between narratives, not just presenting the role models for deriving plausible possible selves. There is also an encouragement to develop avoidable possible selves. For example, God advises humanity in several locations in the Qur'an not to follow the footsteps of Satan (*khutuwāt ash-Shaytān*), referring to him as an apparent (*mubīn*) enemy (Qur'an 2:168; 2:208; 6:142; 24;21; 24;21). Therefore, Satan influences a negative possible self that the Qur'an is consistent in warning against. The Qur'an also mentions the stories of the corrupt ruler Pharaoh, the rich miser Qārūn, and Pharaoh's construction worker, Hamān, as negative PSs (Qur'an 29:39). Other negative avoidable possible selves can be gleaned from the groups the Qur'an portrays as "those who disbelieve," "those who broke the covenant of God,"[758] "those who did wrong,"[759] "those who bought the life of the world in exchange for the hereafter,"[760] "those who consume interest,"[761] "those who desire the worldly life,"[762] and others.

Therefore, religious educators should build curricula for Black American Muslim adolescent males that highlight models from which plausible and avoidable possible selves can

[758] Qur'an 2:27
[759] Qur'an 2:59
[760] Qur'an 2:86
[761] Qur'an 2:275
[762] Qur'an 28:79

be derived. When teaching Black American Muslim adolescent males, it is important to apply a Black American Qur'anic hermeneutic that contextualize the narratives of historical and scriptural superstars. Anne E. Streaty Wimberly proposes the concept of *story-linking*. As a feature of religious education, story-linking is the process of individuals connecting aspects of their lived experiences with stories found in the scripture.[763] Story-linking is designed to move Black American lives towards liberation by assisting them in making decisions that positively impacts their future. The RRIS framework features story-linking as a hermeneutical tool that promotes possible selves.

Possible Selves and Islamic Eschatology

The Qur'an and hadith frequently discuss the inevitability of an event in which humanity will be resurrected and God will judge their faith and works. The righteous amongst humanity will be rewarded with *Jannah* (Paradise) and the evil doers will be punished and placed in *Jahannam* (Hellfire). Muslims construct possible selves from the images provided by the Qur'an's descriptions of *Jannah* and *Jahannam*. For instance, the Qur'an says, "Those will have gardens of perpetual residence; beneath them rivers will flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and will wear green garments of fine silk and brocade, reclining therein on adorned couches. Excellent is the reward, and good is the resting place." (Qur'an 18:31) The Qur'an's vivid descriptions of *Jannah* influences Muslims to construct positive possible selves that experience the reward of eternal shade, fruits, wine (non-intoxicating), verdure, and pious companionship.

[763] Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education* (Nashville: Abringdon Press, 1994), 26.

About *Jahannam*, the Qur'an says, "Then indeed you, O those astray (who are) deniers, will be eating from trees of *zaqūm* and filling with it your bellies, and drinking on top of it from scalding water, and will drink as the drinking of thirsty camels. That is their hospitality on the Day of Recompense." (Quran 56:51-56) Muslims imagine negative avoidable possible selves from the spine-chilling descriptions of *Jahannam.* The evocative images of both *Jannah* and *Jahannam* in the Qur'an provide incentives for people to make positive decisions and perform prosocial behaviors.

Relevant Possible Selves in the Qur'an

According to Lockwood and Kunda, role models have the most impact on a person when they are deemed relevant, that is, when they share similar features and circumstances. Adopting an "outstanding other" as a role model involves social comparison. People are more apt to compare themselves with "outstanding others" that share similarities. There are several passages in the Qur'an that support the notion of relevance. For instance, the Qur'an says, "And We did not send any messenger except in the tongue of his people (*lisān qawmihi*) to state clearly for them..." (Qur'an 14:4) This passage highlights language as a significant similarity that messengers must share with their followers.

Symbolic interactionists see language as symbols that come with a meaning or elicit a "set of responses" that may differ depending on the social context.[764] That is, because the meaning of a symbol is developed through social consensus.[765] For example, the word "sol" means an old French coin in one social context and the sun in another social context.[766] Based on this perspective, knowing how to pronounce words does not capture the meaning of knowing

[764] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory 11.
[765] Ibid.
[766] Ibid.

"the tongue of the people (*lisān qawmihi)*." Symbolic interactionists and identity theorists, instead, may contend that knowledge of the language of the people is also being familiar with the sociocultural context and how people define and respond cognitively and physically to words as symbols.

The Qur'an also stresses relevance with regard to Prophet Muhammad. In the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad tells his followers, "I am only a man (*bashar*) like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God... (Qur'an 18:110)" In *Sura* 3:144, Prophet Muhammad's mortality is highlighted: "Muhammad (SAW) is no more than a messenger, and indeed messengers have passed away before him (Qur'an 3:144)." Not just Prophet Muhammad, the Qur'an underscores that all the prophets were human beings who ate food and died (Qur'an 21:78).

While many found inspiration and self-enhancement from the relevance and closeness of Prophet Muhammad, some used his similarity in features and circumstances as an excuse to oppose and harass him. His opposition would complain, "Why does this Messenger (Muhammad) eat food and walk about in the markets (like ourselves). Why is not an angel sent down to him to be a warner with him? (Qur'an 25:7)" Lockwood and Kunda offer an explanation of these two contradictory reactions to the relevance of Prophet Muhammad. They assert "that superstars can lead to self-enhancement and inspiration under some circumstances and to self-deflation and demoralization under others."[767] If a person believes that they can achieve similar success to the superstar, they will feel enhanced and inspired.[768] However, if they perceive that

[767] Lockwood and Kunda, "Superstars and Me: Predicting the Impact of Role Models on the Self" 91.
[768] Ibid., 92

they cannot, they will feel demoralized and deflated.[769] Perhaps, Prophet Muhammad's self-enhanced followers wanted to achieve something similar to him (i.e., God's favor, Paradise, etc.,). Some of his inspired followers, perhaps, could have been *basking in the reflected glory* of Prophet Muhammad's success.[770] While his adversaries may have become deflated and demoralized, doing an upward comparison, and believing they would not be able to attain a comparable success to Prophet Muhammad.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an offers a response for the demoralized group who felt that God should have sent angels instead of human beings, by saying, "If there were on the earth, angels walking about in peace and security, We (God) should certainly have sent down for them from the heaven an angel as a Messenger (Qur'an 17:95)." The social comparison models along with the related Qur'anic passages indicate that the relevance and closeness in features and circumstances of the prophets, messengers, and righteous figures make them affective models to derive possible selves. By adopting the hermeneutical tool of story-linking, religious teachers can impact the lives of Black American Muslim adolescent males by exposing how relevant and close these narratives are to the Black experience in America.

Possible Selves for the RRIS Framework

Possible selves of those with low religio-racial salience: The person with low religio-racial identity salience resides in an environment that lacks the conditions that foster the conceptualization of positive possible future selves. Due to the lack of exposure to successful models, he has imagined a future successful self that will lead to his future feared self. For instance, he fears a future in prison, on drugs, or impoverished, while imagining a future self that

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[769] Ibid.
[770] Robert B. Cialdini and et al, "Basking in Reflected Glory: Three (Football) Field Studies," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 34, no. 3 (1976): 366.

amasses riches through criminal activity. The imbalance is indicative of his lack of reflection about the consequences of his actions.

Thus, his current behavior reflects the possible selves he created growing up in the inner-city. First of all, he never had a strong sense of self with regard to his racial identity. Oyserman and Harrison argue that racial identity is "integral to the process of developing possible selves and reducing negative consequences of stereotypes."[771] He is unaware of how racial stratification has impacted him personally, as well as his community. Furthermore, he does not have a connection to a healthy Black American community. His connection is to a group of his peers that also struggle in constructing viable possible selves. This group provided the feedback that indicated that his negative possible selves were accepted and approved. Yet, most of the images of Black American males that he has been exposed to are in prison or currently engaged in criminal activity, lack education, and/or abuse drugs and alcohol. When he encounters an educated Black American male, he does not consider them as *acting Black*. He knows a couple of people at the mosque with degrees in higher education. Unfortunately, he possesses a fixed mindset that will not allow him to take these successful Black American males as role models.

Possible selves of those with medium religio-racial salience: The person with medium religio-racial salience experiences a social context that is somewhat supportive of the construction of possible selves. This person has plausible possible selves that contradict one another. For example, he imagines his future self giving a substantial amount in charity to the mosque and those in need. However, he also envisions one of his possible selves as a gambler

[771] Oyserman and Harrison, "Implications of Cultural Context: African American Identity and Possible Selves."

and drinker at the casino. This reflects his circumstance of being in two contradictory environments.

He attends the Black mosque in which there is a strong racial awareness, racism is discussed, and he feels a sense of membership to the religio-racial community. On the other hand, he hangs out in his neighborhood with his peers and discusses and partakes in behaviors that confirm racial stereotypes. He has superstar role models at the mosque, he reads about historical luminaries, studies the *sīra* of Prophet Muhammad, and he listens to sermons about his favorite scriptural superstars. However, he observes the salient figures in his neighborhood that mainly consist of individuals who perform antisocial behaviors. One group of role models reminds him of God while the other group of role models reminds him of Satan. Hopefully, he is able to fully commit to the religio-racial environment and return to his neighborhood in the future as a positive role model that others can derive possible selves from.

Possible selves of those with high religio-racial salience: The person with high religio-racial identity salience resides in an environment that is conducive for imagining healthy plausible possible selves. He has configured possible selves that are counter to one another. His socializing agents have clearly identified avoidable selves and have given him the tools and strategies to avoid these feared selves. He refuses to engage in criminal acts because he has considered the dire consequences of getting caught. Furthermore, he strives to please God. He reflects on the vivid descriptions in the Qur'an of *Jannah* and, therefore, has imagined his after-death self enjoying *Jannah*.

Moreover, he has a strong sense of self stemming from his racial consciousness. He is aware of racism and how it has negatively impacted his community. He feels connected to his religio-racial community and is inspired by listening to the narratives of the elders. The religious

director of the mosque is his role model and he has derived a possible leader self based on the religious director's example. Additionally, there are several congregational superstars who have inspired several of his plausible possible selves. Seeing his successful role models has allowed him to associate being a Black American Muslim male with being educated, well-to-do, faithful, as well as a great father, husband, and son. He finds inspiration reading about historical luminaries such as Mansa Musa of the Mali empire, one of the richest men in the history of humanity. On top of that, he attends a weekly class that discusses the *sīra* of Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, the religious director uses story-linking in his sermons and thus, he is able to connect the narratives of scriptural superstars in the Qur'an with his adolescent life. All his role models remind him of God and the gifts God has given him.

Table 5.2 Relgio-Racial Identity Salience Model

	Low Religio-Racial Salience	**Medium Religio-Racial Salience**	**High Religio-Racial Salience**
Religio-Racial Self	Low interactional or affective commitment Commanding *nafs* Q*alb* devoid of faith "I" disregards "Me" Identity-nonverification	Medium interactional or affective commitment Reproachable *nafs* Q*alb* that accepts or rejects Shaitan. "I" is in moral struggle with "Me" Identity-verification or nonverification	Aligned with *Fitrah* High interactional or affective commitment Tranquil *nafs* *Qalb* brimming with faith Fusing of the "I" and "me" Identity-verification
Basic Psychological Need	**Incompetence Motivation:** Stereotype Threat Lacks Resources Cool Pose Fixed-Mindset Person-Focused Feedback **Heteronomous Motivation:** Adultification Teachers Controlled Motivation Defensive-Neglectful Parenting Rarely attends religious space **Rejected and Resentful:** PCPR/PCNR	Somewhat Competence-Support Somewhat Incompetence Motivation Somewhat Autonomy-Support Somewhat Heteronomous Motivation Somewhat Relatedness-Support Somewhat Rejected and Resentful	**Competence-Support:** Muslim Cool Growth Mindset Wise Feedback Process-focused Feedback AA-RITES **Autonomy-Support:** Cohesive-Authoritative Parenting Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Frequents Religious Space RJ **Relatedness-Support:** UPR RMT
Possible Selves	Lack of Racial Identity Lack of Balance in Possible Selves Lack of Observational Learning Antisocial Role Models Lack of Possible Selves Intervention Lack of Story-Linking	Somewhat Racial Identity Somewhat Balance-Oriented Feedback Somewhat Observational Learning Somewhat Possible Intervention Somewhat Story-Linking	**Racial Identity** Awareness of racism Ingroup connection Embedded achievement **Balance-Oriented Feedback** Plausible Possible Selves Avoidable Possible Selves **RRIS Observational Learning** Congregational Superstar Religious Director Superstar Historical Luminary Superstar Prophetic Superstar Scriptural Superstar **Possible Selves Intervention Program**

Conclusion

In this chapter, we set out to gain a better understanding of possible selves as it pertains to the self-concept and its influence on identity development. Possible selves, we found, are critical for adolescent males attempting to make sense out of their futures. We also found that possible selves emerge from social interaction and, therefore, socializing agents must promote healthy racial identification, provide balance-oriented feedback, available and visible role models, possible selves intervention, and use hermeneutical tools that promote possible selves. The next chapter introduces the final component of the RRIS model, religious task value.

Chapter 6: Influencing Subjective Task Value of Religious Tasks for Black American Muslim Adolescent Males

Introduction

In their landmark study, Stryker and Serpe found that both a person's religious identity salience and religious identity commitment were "directly and positively" linked to the number of hours the person spent performing religious tasks.[772] It is thus worthwhile to inquire: What motivates people to make personal choices that bring about the participation in various religious activities? Eccles and her team postulated that people engage in activities that they expect to succeed at and that they value. Their Expectancy Value Model of Motivated Behavioral Choices (EVM) offers insight into how individuals are motivated to enact the behaviors attached to their religio-racial identities.

Using this cognitive motivational framework as a lens, this chapter explores how adolescents come to value religious tasks and how socializing agents can help raise the value of religious tasks. I begin this chapter by summarizing EVM and its primary components as well as the frameworks from which EVM was derived. Secondly, I review the research on interest value including its types, how it develops, effective interventions, and its usefulness for the religio-racial socialization of Black American Muslim adolescent males. Thirdly, I use the Model of Psychological Nigrescence to contextualize the attainment value construct and apply it to the lives of Black American Muslim adolescent males. Fourthly, I expound on utility value and highlight proven interventions which can be transferred to the religious domain. Fifthly, I present the concept of cost value as well as techniques based on case studies that can reduce the cost (real or perceived) of religious tasks. Lastly, I offer a religious understanding of subjective tasks

[772] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior" 217.

value based on textual evidence from the Qur'an and *hadīth*. This chapter finishes with a suggestion that socializing agents can motivate Black American Muslim adolescent males to perform religious tasks by understanding subjective task values and applying intervention strategies that raise the interest, attainment, and utility values, while reducing the cost value of religious tasks.

Expectancy Value Model of Behavioral Choices

Expectancy value model of behavioral choices (EVM) has roots in Kurt Lewin's works on values, Edward C. Tolman's works on expectancies, and John W. Atkinson's expectancy-value model.[773] Lewin argued that the value of a task determined if people wanted to pursue that task.[774] Tolman's research focused on how "expectancies for success" impacts people's choice of an activity.[775] Atkinson proposed that expectancy and values are inversely related. In other words, "tasks for which one has low expectancies for success should be the ones that are most valued."[776]

Building off these works, EVM argues that people look for two main components when engaging in identity-related behaviors or adopting identities: 1) expectations and personal efficacy component, and 2) a subjective task value component.[777] Eccles confirms the works of earlier theorists including SDT, that suggest that personal feelings of competence and efficacy

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[773] Allan Wigfield, Emily Q. Rosenzweig, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, "Achievement Values: Interventions, Interactions, and Future Achievements," in Handbook of Competence and Motivation, ed. Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck, and Yeager David S., Second Edi (New York: Guilford Press, 2017), 116.
[774] Ibid.
[775] Ibid.
[776] Ibid.
[777] Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action" 78.

play a major role in behavioral choice.[778] People tend to engage in activities that they sense a high probability of success. What Eccles terms as a person's "ability self-concepts and perceptions of task difficulty" are psychological indicators of expectations for their success in a certain task.[779] These ability self-concepts derive from several social variables: 1) social comparisons with those performing a similar task, 2) measuring the difficulty of the task, 3) measuring the amount of time it would take to become good at performing the task, 4) examining their own intellect regarding the task, and 5) surveying the opinions of others (parents, teachers, peers, and etc.) regarding their performance of the tasks.[780] Another consideration is that a person does not assess or even pursue competence in a behavior if the person does not value the behavior.[781] The competence component has been dealt with extensively commenting on the SDT framework and so I will spend the remainder of this chapter covering subjective task values.

Subjective Task Values

Subjective task values, according to Eccles, function in tandem with personal competence beliefs.[782] Subjective implies that people associate different values to the same task. Task value refers to quality of the tasks and how the quality motivates a person to performs the task. Studies indicate that if a person perceives that they cannot excel at a task, they lower the subjective task value of that behavior to avoid negative affect.[783] There are four task values: 1) *interest value*, 2)

[778] Ibid.
[779] Ibid., 82
[780] Ibid., 84
[781] Ibid.
[782] Ibid.
[783] Ibid.

attainment value, 3) *utility value*, and 4) *perceived cost*,[784] each of which will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Interest value refers to the subjective enjoyment that one experiences when performing a task.[785] Although they are derived from different traditions, theorists have compared interest value with SDT's intrinsic motivation.[786] The pleasure a person receives from performing a task will drive them to pursue mastery in the task and integrate the task into their identity.[787] Feeling competent and finding a task pleasurable will most likely result in attributing high value to the task.[788] However, if one enjoys a task but does not feel competent at it, they may pursue the task until they reach sufficient levels of competency.[789]

Attainment value is about the tasks that allow a person to express significant aspects of their identity and self-image.[790] Individuals have different identities and therefore their subjective value for a task is also different. For instance, the soccer player may value the task that pertains to her sport, while the psychologist values activities that confirm his identity as a psychologist. In all, people place high value on the activities that give them a sense of self.[791]

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[784] Ibid., 82
[785] Wigfield, Rosenzweig, and Eccles, "Achievement Values: Interventions, Interactions, and Future Achievements" 116.
[786] Ibid.
[787] Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action" 83.
[788] Ibid.
[789] Ibid.
[790] Wigfield, Rosenzweig, and Eccles, "Achievement Values: Interventions, Interactions, and Future Achievements" 116.
[791] Ibid.

Utility value refers to the task that is valued because it helps a person fulfill their goals.[792] For example, a person may take a philosophy class to fulfill general education requirements without having an interest in the field.[793] The person values the class and earns a passing grade because it helps the person get closer to their goal of becoming an engineer. If the course were not needed to reach a goal, the person most likely would refrain from enrolling in the course.

Cost value describes the overall toll that comes with performing an activity.[794] Factors such as anxiety or the fear of social backlash can deter a person from performing a task.[795] Furthermore, a person may not engage in an activity because failing the activity will take too much of a toll on their psychological state. A person may attribute low value to a task if performing the task will leave a person emotionally drained. Sometimes engaging in one activity will get in the way of performing another activity that is more central to a person's goals or identity.[796] An individual may ponder the question, "Do I go to the party or prepare the assignment to turn in by tomorrow's deadline?" Also, the high cost is attributed to an activity that will take too much time and energy compared to a task that is more aligned with a person's identity.[797]

Developing Interest Value for Religious Tasks

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[792] Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action" 83.
[793] Ibid.
[794] Wigfield, Rosenzweig, and Eccles, "Achievement Values: Interventions, Interactions, and Future Achievements" 116.
[795] Eccles, "Who Am I and What Am I Going to Do With My Life? Personal and Collective Identities as Motivators of Action." 83.
[796] Ibid.
[797] Ibid.

Going back to John Dewey, interest has been a foremost topic with respect to motivation.[798] It is self-evident that the more interest a person has in a topic, the more they are willing to learn about the topic. Conversely, the less interest a person has in a subject, the less willing they are to learn the subject. Interest is conceptualized as "the psychological state of engaging or the predisposition to reengage with particular classes of objects, events, or ideas over time."[799] According to Suzanne Hidi and K. Ann Renninger, interest consists of both affective and cognitive components.[800] The affective component refers to positive emotions experienced upon engagement of the task,[801] whereas the cognitive component touches on the "perceptual and representational activities" pertaining to engagement.[802]

Situational and Individual Interests

Theorists have further divided interest into two types including situational and individual.[803] According to Suzanne Hidi and Dagmar Berndorff, individual interest can be associated with intrinsic motivation, while situational interest has a strong correlation with extrinsic motivation.[804] Situational interest describes having one's attention and emotions temporarily triggered by a situation, task, or object. This category of interest is associated with a short-term trigger from something that is unexpected, surprising, novelty, and personally

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[798] Chris S. Hulleman et al., "Task Values, Achievement Goals, and Interest: An Integrative Analysis," Journal of Educational Psychology 100, no. 2 (2008): 3.
[799] Suzanne Hidi and K Ann Renninger, "The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development," [Artículo de Revista] Educational Psychologist 41, no. 2 (2006): 112.
[800] Ibid.
[801] Ibid.
[802] Ibid.
[803] Ibid., 113
[804] Suzanne Hidi, "Interest, Reading, and Learning: Theoretical and Practical Considerations," Educational Psychology Review 13, no. 3 (2001): 204.

relevant.[805] Moreover, situational interest is difficult to maintain after the person's attention is aroused. For example, a person may be driving down the road and suddenly triggered by the sight of an interesting billboard, prompting him to pull over and read.[806]

Individual interest, on the other hand, is more stable and targets an individual's traits and characteristics.[807] Further, it is related to a particular subject matter or object that a person enjoys and motivates a person to reengage a task.[808] An example of individual interest is usually seen in a child's love for a video game. [809] Video games may keep a child's attention even if it is difficult and requires long hours to master.[810] Also, according to studies conducted by Henk G. Schmidt and colleagues, individual interest demonstrates a more positive correlation between interest and learning.[811]

Four-Phase Model of Interest Development

Hidi and Renninger suggest a four-phase model of interest development that includes the following phases: (a) *triggered situational,* (b) *maintained situational,* (c) *emerging individual*, and (d) *well-developed individual interest*.[812] These phases can be effective across several domains. The first phase, triggered situational interest, describes when a person's attention is caught which may or may not develop into an individual interest.[813] The maintained situational phase occurs when a person experiences positive emotions and continues to develop their

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[805] Jerome I. Rotgans and Henk G. Schmidt, "Situational Interest and Learning: Thirst for Knowledge," Learning and Instruction 32 (2014): 38.
[806] Ibid.
[807] Ibid.
[808] Ibid.
[809] Ibid., 37
[810] Ibid.
[811] Ibid., 45
[812] K. Ann Renninger and Hidi Suzanne E., The Power of Interest for Motivation and Engagement (New York: Routledge, 2016), 12.
[813] Ibid.

knowledge of the content of interest.[814] If a person continues to develop interest in the content, he will enter into the third phase, emerging individual interest.[815] The fourth phase signifies when a person's interest develops into a well-developed individual interest.[816] During this phase, the person will commit to the interest and endure the obstacles associated with the content.[817]

How Does Interest Develop?

Several studies have been conducted that provide strategies for how to develop interest. Presumably, these findings have implications that also extend to the religious environment and can be implemented to develop the interest value of Black American Muslim adolescent males. Mathew Mitchell attempted to respond to the field's need for an adequate theoretical model that addresses the development of interest.[818] He conducted a study using qualitative and quantitative methodologies with a high school mathematics class.[819] From this study emerged five subfacets that can enhance situational interest: meaningfulness or the relevance of the information for real life, involvement (students perceiving themselves as active learners rather than passive absorbers of knowledge), group work, computers, and puzzles.[820] Of these five, involvement stood out as being the most effective strategy of maintaining situational interest in the classroom.[821]

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[814] Ibid.
[815] Ibid.
[816] Ibid.
[817] Ibid.
[818] Mathew Mitchell, "Situational Interest: Its Multifaceted Structure in the Secondary School Mathematics Classroom," Journal of Educational Psychology 85, no. 3 (1993): 424.
[819] Ibid.
[820] Ibid., 433
[821] Ibid., 434

Mary Ainley and John Ainley set out to investigate how to sustain children's interest in science.[822] They found that early experiences with science that trigger interest in the child will lead to a higher probability that interest in science will further develop in later years, especially if their interest is supported by family or community.[823] They also concluded that for students to have a sustained interest in science, the students need activities that connect science to solving real-world problem.[824] Additionally, adolescents need "challenging" and "supportive" family environments. Challenging implies that the adolescent perceives that science is important to his family and that they require him to focus his attention on certain goals pertaining to the subject.[825] Supportive denotes that his family shows love, affection, and support when things become difficult.[826]

Diana I. Cordova and Mark R. Lepper researched the impact of three strategies to increase intrinsic motivation in students: contextualization, personalization, and provision of choices.[827] Contextualization refers to the beneficial effects of connecting lessons to concrete everyday realities and activities.[828] The personalization strategy aligns with research indicating students are more interested in learning and remembering the material that connects to topics of

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[822] Mary Ainley and John Ainley, "Early Science Learning Experiences: Triggered and Maintained Interest," in *Interest in Mathematics and Science Learning*, ed. K. Ann Renninger, Martina Nieswandt, and Suzanne Hidi (Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 2015).
[823] Ibid.
[824] Ibid.
[825] Ibid.
[826] Ibid.
[827] Diana I. Cordova and Mark R. Lepper, "Intrinsic Motivation and the Process of Learning: Beneficial Effects of Contextualization, Personalization, and Choice," Journal of Educational Psychology 88, no. 4 (1996): 715.
[828] Ibid., 715

high prior interest.[829] The third strategy is provision of choice which concurs with self-determination theorists who assert that allowing volition yields more interest from the student.[830]

Motivating Black American Muslim adolescent males through coercion and control will cause them to lose interest in performing religious tasks. Therefore, interest value development strategies will be useful for the Black mosque to implement in their programming for this group. Religious teachers should provide concise explanations behind religious rituals and how these acts relate to real life. Religious curricula that allow Black American Muslim adolescent males to work in groups can also have an impact on their interest value and using computer technology for religious courses will be useful. Furthermore, Black American Muslim adolescent males should be introduced to religious tasks early on in life and supportive and challenging family environments will further raise the interest value of for religious tasks.

Developing Attainment Value for Religious Tasks

Attainment value refers to attributing importance to a task and engaging in it because it confirms one's self-image and identities. Racial identity is usually the most salient feature of Black Americans. Therefore, when considering attainment value and Black American adolescent males, Cross's Model of Psychological Nigrescence can provide necessary insight. First of all, the term *nigrescence* is defined as the process of becoming Black and the model provides the stages that one may go through in their quest to achieve an authentic Black identity. Although it was originally intended for Black Americans in the 1960s and 1970s, Black American continue to experience racism and discrimination and so the model is still relevant for today.

[829] Ibid., 716
[830] Ibid.

This model is made up of five stages: 1) *pre-encounter*, 2) *encounter*, 3) *immersion-emersion*, 4) *internalization*, and 5) *internalization-commitment*.[831] The *pre-encounter* stage describes the person who behaves in a manner that degrades and misrepresents Blackness. Moreover, the hallmark of this stage is that the individual falls into a state of deracination. Therefore, during this stage, high attainment value is attributed to behaviors that confirm negative identities.

The *encounter* stage involves a "shocking event" that forces the person to reconsider his values.[832] This occurrence may involve a negative experience with law enforcement or microaggressions from fellow Muslims at the mosque. Either way, the person is left to reexamine his perceptions of the world. After realizing that his old ways of thinking are based on a delusion and disregards the historical figures that have fought and died for his freedom, he makes a concerted effort to search for his Black identity.

The third stage, or *immersion-emersion* signifies that the person is experiencing a high level of Blackness without fully internalizing their newly found consciousness. William E. Cross Jr. expounds,

> This period of emergent identity or 'just discovered Blackness' is manifested in the construction of the correct ideology and/or worldview, glorification of African heritage, dichotomous ('either-or') thinking, Blacker-than-thou attitudes, unrealistic expectations concerning the efficacy of Black Power, and the tendency to denigrate White people and White culture while simultaneously deifying Black people and Black culture.[833]

Although they miss the mark at times, during this stage, they set out to perform the tasks that confirm their identity of being Black.

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[831] Cross Jr., "The Thomas and Cross Models of Psychological Nigrescence: A Review" 16.
[832] Cross Jr., 17
[833] Cross Jr.

The next stage, *internalization*, signifies resolution between the old identity and new racially conscious identity.[834] The person has learned to balance their Black identity while hostile feelings toward White Americans begin to subside.[835] This leads to the final stage, *internalization-commitment*, the ideal stage when Blackness is internalized and the person is committed to the group. During this stage, the person performs behaviors that are meaningful to the group.[836] That is, attainment value is high for those activities that confirm Black American identity. Their ideals and values are shaped by the best examples in Black American culture.

I hypothesize that the internalization-commitment stage is the most viable for raising the attainment value for religious behaviors. Oyserman, Ager, and Gant assert that,

> African American identity has been related to better functioning whether measured by lack of depressive symptomatology, occupational attainment, or fewer behavior problems in school. Lack of African American identity is assumed to result in misinterpretation of social experience, self-blame, and guilt for limited occupational, educational, and economic success.[837]

Eccles and her colleagues further contend that fostering healthy "identification" with one's racial group can serve as a buffer against the impact of racism.[838] While Danice L. Brown suggests that racial socialization and social support from networks of Black Americans can lead to resilience.[839] From these assertions, it appears having a healthy racial identity can enhance one's religious orientation.

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[834] Ibid., 18
[835] Ibid.
[836] Ibid.
[837] Oyserman, Ager, and Gant, "A Socially Contextualized Model of African American Identity: Possible Selves and School Persistence" 1220.
[838] Eccles, Wong, and Peck, "Ethnicity as a Social Context for the Development of African-American Adolescents" 411.
[839] Brown, "African American Resiliency: Examining Racial Socialization and Social Support as Protective Factors" 32.

For this reason, socializing agents of Black American Muslim adolescent males must not neglect the racial identity of this target group. Teaching lessons about the Black companions around Prophet Muhammad and recognizing African and Black American scholarship will promote a balanced self-concept for Black American Muslim adolescent males. When Black American Muslim adolescent males have a stable sense of self, they will perform the religious behaviors that advance the religio-racial group.

Developing Utility Value for Religious Tasks

Communicating the relevance of religion and its rituals is not an easy task, especially in a climate that seems antithetical to organized religion. Utility value is determined by the task's usefulness for a future task or aspect of one's life. Although the task may not be enjoyed by the person, they engage in it because of its usefulness for the future. Utility value aligns with SDT's construct of extrinsic motivation because it hinges on other tasks.[840] This construct also relates to possible selves being that a person it motivated to perform a task that leads to confirming a possible self. This is the case for the person who must take a statistics class that they dread to obtain a degree in their ideal career. Research has demonstrated that utility value is a potentially important antecedent of interest value.[841]

Utility Value Interventions

Chris S. Hulleman, Olga Godes, Bryan L. Hendricks, and Judith M. Harackiewicz conducted research with the purpose of motivating students to find relevance in their schoolwork.[842] Students were given a writing assignment in which they had to explain the

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[840] Allan Wigfield and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, "Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation," Contemporary Educational Psychology 25, no. 1 (2000): 73.
[841] Chris S. Hulleman et al., "Enhancing Interest and Performance With a Utility Value Intervention," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 102, no. 4 (2010): 881.
[842] Ibid.

relevance of the current subject that they were studying to their own lives.[843] The intervention was especially successful for students who perform poorly and have low performance expectations."[844] From this research they recommend relevance writing intervention as an effective way to promote utility value.[845]

Parents also play a critical role in communicating the utility value of a subject to their children. This assertion was corroborated in research conducted by Harakiewicz, Hulleman, Christopher S. Rozek, and Janet S. Hyde. Their three-part intervention included brochures and a website educating parents of 188 adolescents about the usefulness of STEM courses.[846] They found this simple intervention increased dialogue between parents and their adolescents about the utility value of STEM courses and resulted in adolescent students enrolling in more STEM courses for their last two years of high school.[847] Therefore, when the utility value of a subject increases with the parents, the parents will motivate their children to see relevance in the subject.

Furthermore, Elizabeth A. Canning and Harackiewicz investigated the effectiveness of directly communicating utility value information versus self-generated utility value information.[848] Across three studies they found that directly communicating utility value information can undermine motivation for students that lack confidence.[849] They further found that utility value information is more impactful when students are given an opportunity to

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[843] Ibid.
[844] Ibid., 50
[845] Ibid.
[846] Judith M. Harackiewicz et al., "Helping Parents to Motivate Adolescents in Mathematics and Science: An Experimental Test of a Utility-Value Intervention," Psychological Science 23, no. 8 (2012): 1.
[847] Ibid., 6
[848] Elizabeth A. Canning and Judith M. Harackiewicz, "Teach It, Don't Preach It: The Differential Effects of Directly-Communicated and Self-Generated Utility Value Information.," Motivation Science 1, no. 1 (2015): 47.
[849] Ibid., 65

personalize the usefulness of a subject in their own lives.[850] Canning and Harackiewicz assert, "Individuals who lack confidence in their ability may need to discover relevance information on their own before they can develop deeper interest in the material."[851] Additionally, for individuals who lacked confidence, the utility value information was more motivating when it incorporated everyday examples rather than career and school examples.[852]

Gleaning from these studies, utility value interventions are essential for Black American Muslim adolescent males. I assume that the interventions conducted in the academic domain can be transferable to the religious domain. Socializing agents can provide writing assignments or projects that give Black American Muslims adolescent males the opportunity to generate the ways in which religion is relevant to their lives. The parents of Black American Muslim adolescent males should be given utility value information about religious practices. They will then have the tools to communicate the utility value to their adolescents.

Reducing the Cost Value for Religious Tasks

Cost value is the least researched of the subjective task values.[853] Cost is significant because it could explain why a person refrains from performing a task. That is because every choice has a presumed cost that influences the person to chose one task over another. For instance, after considering the cost of going back to school and the effort and time that it will take, a person may choose to abandon that as a goal. After conducting a broad literature review,

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[850] Ibid.
[851] Canning and Harackiewicz, "Teach It, Don't Preach It: The Differential Effects of Directly-Communicated and Self-Generated Utility Value Information" 50.
[852] Ibid., 66
[853] Allan Wigfield and Jenna Cambria, "Expectancy-Value Theory: Retrospective and Prospective," in The Decade Ahead: Theoretical Perspectives on Motivation and Achievement Advances in Motivation and Achievement, ed. Timothy C. Urdan and Stuart A. Karabenick, vol. 16A (North America: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2010), 40.

Jessica Kay Flake and her team determined that cost value was influenced by four factors: 1) task effort cost, 2) outside effort cost, 3) loss of valued alternatives, and 4) emotional cost.[854] Task effort cost refers to the time, effort, or amount of work put forth to perform the task.[855] The outside effort cost signals the time, effort, or amount of work put forth to perform other valued tasks.[856] The loss of valued alternatives speaks to what is given up as a consequence of performing a valued task.[857] While, the emotional cost is the negative psychological state that stems from facing difficulty performing the task.[858] The cost of a task is cognitively weighed in a cost/benefit analysist. If the cost of performing the task increases, the value of the task decreases.[859]

For instance, consider the distinct predicaments of the following three Black American Muslim adolescent males. Musa recently started attending the Sunday Islamic studies program for teens at his local mosque. Many of the other teens in the program attend Muslim school, have majority Muslim friends, and were from households with parents who model practicing Muslim behaviors. Whereas Musa goes to public school, has few Muslim friends, and his parents are nonpracticing Muslims. Being unfamiliar with much of the material, Musa gets frustrated in Islamic studies classes, especially in the Arabic language portion, because he is behind, and the other students have prior experience with the subjects. He now feels unmotivated to attend and lately has been asking his parent not to take him to the mosque on Sundays.

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[854] Jessica Kay Flake et al., "Measuring Cost: The Forgotten Component of Expectancy-Value Theory," Contemporary Educational Psychology 41, no. March (2015): 232.
[855] Ibid., 235
[856] Ibid.
[857] Ibid.
[858] Ibid.
[859] Wigfield and Cambria, "Expectancy-Value Theory: Retrospective and Prospective."

In contrast, Abdul Mateen is one of the top students in the same Islamic studies program for teens. He attends Muslim private school and he has a tutor in Islamic studies twice a week. Furthermore, his father and his mother constantly model Islamic values in the household. He knows many of the answers to the questions that the teacher poses, and he excels in the Arabic language portion of the lessons. He wakes up early every Sunday ready and motived to attend the classes. Furthermore, the teachers and his fellow students have respect for Abdul Mateen because of his religious acumen.

Reflecting on the narratives of Musa and Abdul Mateen, we find that the cost of the Islamic studies program for teens is different for both Black American Muslim adolescent males. In Musa's case, he does not feel efficacious in that environment. Furthermore, he feels that it will take too much time, effort, and energy to catch up to the other students. He also fears that he will fail at achieving reading proficiency in the Arabic language. In other words, the time, effort, and psychological costs are too high for Musa to feel motivated to continue attending the classes. In Abdul Mateen's case, the cost for attending the Sunday program is low. He was exposed to these subjects before adolescence, which increased the interest value of the classes. His parents have explained the utility value of becoming proficient in Islamic studies. The time, effort, energy to that Abdul Mateen will expend does not thwart his motivation to attend the program and, therefore, he in class bright and early every Sunday.

Strategies for Reducing Cost Value

Evelyn S. Chiang and colleagues surveyed 258 fifth graders to see how cost value relates to their P.E. classes.[860] They identified two distinct types of cost that deters engagement in P.E.

[860] Evelyn Chiang et al., "Elementary Physical Education: Cost Is Personal and Social," Archives of Psychology 4, no. 3 (2020): 1.

including, personal discomfort cost and social cost.[861] Personal discomfort cost is physical such as being sweaty or feeling fatigued and social cost refers to being unable to compete with peers, feeling fearful of being dislike or ridiculed for performing well.[862] To address issues arising from multiple types of cost, Chiang and colleagues suggest that teachers attempt to lessen the severity of these distinct types of costs until they are able to increase engagement.[863] For instance, if children are worried about the results of running in the sun, search for concessions such as running in an airconditioned gym if that is available.[864] If the children want to avoid the social cost of being embarrassed or compared to their peers, the teachers find ways to foster safety.[865] The researchers also recommend that teachers should help build the psychological need of competence in children. Interestingly, Anja Van Den Broeck and others, in their study of workplace motivation, suggested that fostering all three psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness can "reduce costs associated with stress or turnover, and increase productivity."[866] Lastly, Chiang and colleagues recommended to teachers that raising the interest, attainment, and utility values of P.E. and other habits that promote good health can decrease the cost involved in performing a task.[867]

For Black American Muslim adolescent males, cost value is a major factor in decisions to engage or not engage in a particular task. To engage in religious tasks, Black American Muslim adolescent males must give up aspects of coolness, friendships, aspects of social acceptance, and

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[861] Ibid., 10
[862] Ibid.
[863] Ibid.
[864] Ibid.
[865] Ibid., 10-11
[866] Anja Van den Broeck et al., "Capturing Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness at Work: Construction and Initial Validation of the Work-Related Basic Need Satisfaction Scale," Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology 83, no. 4 (2010): 997.
[867] Ibid., 11

monetary resources in some cases. For this group, there is also a high psychological cost in being labeled as acting white and being deemed uncool. To this end, socializing agents play a critical role in raising and lowering the cost value for a task. Therefore, socializing agents must configure interventions and strategies to lower the cost of religious tasks for the Black American Muslim adolescent males. Considering the lack of research with regard to cost portion of the task value, we found that socializing agents that provide psychological needs support and interventions for interest, attainment, and utility values can reduce the cost for religious tasks.

Table 6.1. Subjective Task Value Interventions

Interest	***Attainment***	***Utility***	***Cost***
Novelty Student involvement Challenging and supportive family environments Contextualization Personalization Provision of choice Computers Group work	Racial Identity (i.e., education, connectivism)	Relevance writing intervention Utility value information for parents Self-generated utility value information	Basic Psychological needs Raising Interest, Attainment, and Utility Value

Subjective Task Value in the Qur'an

There are several instances in which the Qur'an attempts to increase religious tasks value. For example, in the first eleven passages of the chapter called *The Believers*, task value may be raised for performing prayer with humility, refraining from foul speech, paying the poor tax, abstaining from fornication, fulfilling one's promises, and maintaining obligatory prayers (Qur'an 23:1-9). By examining these passages, we several strategies to raise subjective task value for these religious behaviors. Firstly, this chapter opens by saying "Successful indeed are

the believers (*mu'minūn*)," attaching a special designation to those who perform these religious tasks. Interestingly, this strategy is employed again in the tenth passage of this chapter which places those who perform these religious tasks into another elite group known as the *wārithūn,* commonly translated as inheritors (Qur'an 23:10). We gather from these passages that giving people special designations and placing them in elite groups has motivational implications that can raise task value.

The eleventh passage says, "Those who will inherit *al-Firdaus*, they will abide therein eternally" (Qur'an 23:11). Al-Firdaus, according to As-Sābūnī is the upward most and middle most portion of paradise.[868] The promise of an eternal home in paradise is another strategy that raises task value for religious behavior. Ibn Juzayy points out that the *wārithūn* are deserving (*mustahiqqūn*) of paradise. Perhaps Black Americans Muslim adolescent males find motivation in the promise of a place without racism and discrimination.

Subjective Task Value in Hadith

In addition to passages in the Qur'an, *hadiths* are use to raise the subjective task value of specific religious behaviors. Take for example, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "Faith has over seventy branches or over sixty branches, the most excellent of which is the declaration that there is no god but Allah, and the humblest of which is the removal of what is injurious from the path: and modesty is the branch of faith."[869] Referring to these behaviors as the "most excellent" increases the utility values of these acts. Hadīth such as this one should be contextualized, personalized, then discussed with Black American Muslim adolescent males.

[868] Muhammad A. Sabuni, Safwa At-Tafasir (Beirut: Almaktab-Alassrya, 2015), 304.
[869] "Sahih Muslim," Sunnah.com, accessed January 5, 2021, https://sunnah.com/muslim/1/60.

Another narration mentions seven types of individuals who are promised God's shade (*zill*) on a day that only God will provide shade to those who are deserving. This elite group includes: 1) a just leader, 2) a youth who grows up worshipping God, 3) a person whose heart is attached to the mosque, 4) two people who love each other, meet, and depart for God's sake, 5) a person who is invited to fornicate with a woman with beauty and status yet rejects the invitation saying, "I fear God," 6) a person who secretly gives charity with their right hand and their left hand is unaware of what the right hand has given, and 7) a person who remembers God in seclusion until his eyes shed tears.[870] Like the previous *hadith*, this *hadith* also raises the utility value of these tasks. Especially important is the second category. Religious teachers can contextualize, personalize, then discuss this prophetic saying with Black American Muslim adolescent males.

Subjective Task Value in Islamic Legal Theory

In Islamic legal theory, behaviors are classified into a hierarchical scale that increases or decreases the subjective task value of an act. These five categories include *wājib* or compulsory, *mubāh* or permissible, *mandūb* or recommended, *makrūh* or reprehensible, and *harām* or illegal. Traditionally, Muslims consult with Muslim legal authorities (i.e., *imams*) about the permissibility of certain acts. Many Muslims refrain from behaviors if they are classified as *harām*. Some continue the behavior; however, the subject task value is lowered in that guilt is triggered in the person committing the act.

From these categories, classical scholars have divided religious education into two types: education that is obligatory for an individual (*fard 'ayn*) and education that is obligatory for the

[870] "Sahih Muslim," Daily Hadith Online, accessed January 5, 2021, https://abuaminaelias.com/dailyhadithonline/2012/08/08/seven-shaded-by-allah/.

community (*fard kifayah*). Education that is obligatory for an individual includes knowing how to perform personal Islamic obligations such as prayer, fasting, performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, and more. It also includes the education that is needed before pursuing an action. For example, if a person wants to get married, they should learn about the Islamic legal rulings for marriage beforehand. Knowledge that is obligatory for the community includes the education that one person or a segment of the community must have in order for the community to sustain itself. For instance, a person and not the entire community must learn how to become an imam so the community can have a religious leader. One person fulfilling the role as an imam will prevent the entire community from incurring a sin.

Religious Task Value for the RRIS Framework

Religious task value for those with low religio-racial salience. The person with low religio-racial identity salience has no interest in performing religious activities. When he attends religious services—whether sermons, congregational prayer, or weekend youth classes—he is bored and finds no enjoyment. The socializing agents in the religious space offer no new experiences for their Black American Muslim adolescent males. The religious teacher at the mosque conducts classes giving lengthy lectures and does not spark their interest with group work and technology. Moreover, the religious teacher does not involve Black American adolescent males the opportunity to get involved in the educational process. Also, Black American adolescent males cannot relate to or apply the information from the *imam's* sermons.

Moreover, this adolescent's family does not provide a supportive environment that fosters love and affection. Instead, his family forces him to perform religious rituals without explaining its relevance to real life. He associates the religion with boredom and dullness, and he cannot wait to get older to get away from his rigid household.

For this person, religious tasks lack attainment value because the religious space fails to foster a sense of self with Black American Muslim adolescent males. The *imam's* sermons do not mention any aspects of the Black American experience. African and Black American scholarship is never referenced by the religious teachers. Interestingly, some Black American males in his mosque reject their racial identity by not acknowledging systemic racism, refusing to involve themselves in Black American issues (i.e., police violence, unemployment), and completely disconnecting from the Black American community.

With respect to this person's utility value for religious activities, he does not see religious tasks as being useful for his future. He feels that religion has not stopped his father from being abusive, his mother from being sad, and has not prevented his family from living in poverty. For him, the cost for performing religious acts are too high. The daily prayers, for example, take too much time and energy and take him away from playing with his friends. He performs religious activities in environments that are controlling and coercive; therefore, performing religious acts triggers a depressive state.

Religious task value for those with medium religio-racial salience. The interest value for religious activities regarding the person with medium religio-racial identity salience tends to fluctuate. For instance, one month, he is interested in attending the mosque for Sunday youth classes and *jumu'ah* or Friday prayer service and the next month he would rather play or hangout with friends during that time of day. The mosque that he attends is not consistent in its teaching methodology. Sometimes, the youth programs are interesting and other times they are boring and monotonous. Similarly, the messages in the sermons and lessons are sometimes relevant and at other times they reflect a culture and context outside of America. This inconsistency causes his interest in attending the mosque to fluctuate.

His family has a similar experience to his with regards to religious tasks. For instance, his parents will perform the five daily prayers consistently for a couple of weeks, then slack off and not find interest in performing the prayer. Furthermore, his family is supportive at times and other times they are controlling. His values seem to reflect the values of his mosque and household.

Also, his mosque only acknowledges racial identity during Black history month, as if they are only Black in February. This has an impact on his attainment value for religious activities. He desires to hear a message that a Black American Muslim adolescent male can relate to. Moreover, he struggles with the amount of utility value that he assigns to religious behaviors. He desires to be more consistent in the future, but he does not know how far into the future. His cost value of religious task also fluctuates. The cost value for religious activities are high when he has lots of school work and he feels he does not have the time nor the energy to attend religious classes. The cost is also high when there is an alternative activity that he would rather participate in instead of participating in religious activities.

Religious tasks value for those with high religio-racial salience. The person with high religio-racial identity salience has a high commitment to their religio-racial identity and spends many hours performing religious acts. He attends a mosque that has religious teachers that have studied the EVM framework. They have strategies to take Black American Muslim adolescents from the *triggered situational* phase to the *well-developed individual interest* phase. At the Sunday youth classes, this person's interest is usually triggered by an interesting religious story and maintained with group work and the use of technology. He loves his religious teachers because their sermons and classes are relevant and relate to everyday experiences. More importantly, his religious teachers involve him in the educational process.

The mosque that he attends along with his household are both autonomy-supportive. His mother and father provide him with love, care, and affection. He also knows that his family values religious activities and he does not want to disappoint them. His parents have instilled a healthy sense of self within him and his siblings. Growing up, his family would have discussions about the biographies of African and Black American luminaries. His religious teachers are Black Americans who value their racial identities. They teach lessons about the Black companions who were around Prophet Muhammad. They also teach lessons on and recognize the accomplishments of luminaries such as Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubious, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and more. The *imam* of the mosque is involved in social justice issues and delivers relevant sermons that relate to the Black American experience. According to Cross's Model of Psychological *Nigrescence,* he is at the *internalization-commitment* stage.

The utility value he has for religious actions are high. He has several congregational role models who are religious and successful in the educational and occupational domains. Whereas, the cost value of religious activities are low because he does not want to pay the hefty cost of losing the reward from his Creator. He believes his religious acts of prayer, charity, reading the Qur'an, and similar tasks will earn him a reward in this life and the afterlife. To this end, he finds peace of mind and solace in performing religious activities. The low cost value of religious tasks are maintained because his household and mosque are needs-supportive and implement interventions that promote interest, attainment, and utility values.

Table 6.2 Religio-Racial Identity Salience Model

	Low Religio-Racial Salience	Medium Religio-Racial Salience	High Religio-Racial Salience
Religio-Racial Self	Low interactional or affective commitment Commanding *nafs* Q*alb* devoid of faith "I" disregards "Me" Identity-nonverification	Medium interactional or affective commitment Reproachable *nafs* Q*alb* that accepts or rejects Shaitan. "I" is in moral struggle with "Me" Identity-verification or nonverification	Aligned with *Fitrah* High interactional or affective commitment Tranquil *nafs* *Qalb* brimming with faith Fusing of the "I" and "me" Identity-verification
Psychological Needs	**Incompetence Motivation:** Stereotype Threat Lacks Resources Cool Pose Fixed-Mindset Person-Focused Feedback **Heteronomous Motivation:** Adultification Teachers Controlled Motivation Defensive-Neglectful Parenting Rarely attends religious space **Rejected and Resentful:** PCPR/PCNR	Somewhat Competence-Support Somewhat Incompetence Motivation Somewhat Autonomy-Support Somewhat Heteronomous Motivation Somewhat Relatedness-Support Somewhat Rejected and Resentful	**Competence-Support:** Muslim Cool Growth Mindset Wise Feedback Process-focused Feedback AA-RITES **Autonomy-Support:** Cohesive-Authoritative Parenting Autonomy-Supportive Teaching Frequents Religious Space RJ **Relatedness-Support:** UPR RMT
Possible Selves	Lack of Racial Identity Lack of Balance in Possible Selves Lack of Observational Learning Antisocial Role Models Lack of Possible Selves Intervention Lack of Story-Linking	Somewhat Racial Identity Somewhat Balance-Oriented Feedback Somewhat Observational Learning Somewhat Possible Intervention Somewhat Story-Linking	**Racial Identity** Awareness of racism Ingroup connection Embedded achievement **Balance-Oriented Feedback** Plausible Possible Selves Avoidable Possible Selves **RRIS Observational Learning** Congregational Superstar Religious Director Superstar Historical Luminary Superstar Prophetic Superstar Scriptural Superstar **Possible Selves Intervention Program**
Subjective Task Value	Reduced Interest Value Reduced Attainment Value Reduced Utility Value Raised Cost Value	Fluctuating Interest Value Fluctuating Attainment Value Fluctuating Reduced Utility Value Fluctuating Cost Value	Raised Interest Value Raised Attainment Value Raised Reduced Utility Value Reduced Cost Value

Conclusion

In this chapter, we explored the EVM literature emphasizing the importance of subjective task value of religious activities. We found that with proper interventions, a religious activity can become a *well-developed individual interest*. We also found that religious tasks with high attainment value can enhance a person's self-definition. Furthermore, a religious task with high utility value can help Black American Muslim adolescent males come closer to attaining their

spiritual goals, while lowering cost value can predict whether this group engages in a religious task. To this end, the task of elucidating the components of the RRIS framework is complete and the next chapter will offer a summary of the model as well as some closing comments.

Chapter 7: Presenting a New Paradigm: Religio-Racial Identity Salience (RRIS) Model.

Introduction

The waning significance of the Black mosque is a real challenge. In the face of growing influences from secular ideologies, images, and messages, especially in young peoples' lives, the Black mosque is struggling to find its voice with Black American adolescent males. This demographic remains at-risk, highly misunderstood, and in need of solution-based intervention and prevention programs that target the primal stage of adolescence. For this reason, the Religio-Racial Identity Salience (RRIS) model was developed, employing the creative theological approach needed to achieve the aims of this dissertation. I invite the Black American Muslim communities to explore this thoughtful framework. I set out to answer the following query: What can socializing agents do to design a religious environment that increases the salience of Muslim identities in Black American Muslim adolescent males? In this dissertation, I provide answers to that question, which will be summarized in this final chapter.

The RRIS model was developed on the premise that the religio-racial self is structured, multifaceted, comprised of different parts, and molded by its social environment. This model relied on the propositions of James, Mead, Stryker, and their colleagues to elucidate the meanings behind these descriptions. At the same time, this model ascribes to Ghazali's three-*nafs* model and Ibn Qayyim's three-*qalb* model. RRIS also aligns with the traditional divisions of the Islamic self—the *nafs, ruh, qalb,* and *aql*—and recognizes that the minutia relating to these is beyond the purpose of human knowledge. Employing the *Islamic filter approach*, the assertions of modern psychological and sociological theorists were examined through a Qur'anic lens and weighed against the prophetic sayings and narratives. Additionally, the critical mutual

correlation method successfully mediated a dialogue and reduced the chasm between Islamic sources and psychosocial theories.

The RRIS model concurs with James who observed that persons possess multiple selves and these selves reflect the number of groups that the person interacts with.[871] Further, Mead divided the self into the "I" and "me," demonstrating the self's ability to perform an activity, then evaluate and criticize its performance by comparing its performance to that of others.[872] Mead and other symbolic interactionists viewed the world as being made up of symbols that are assigned meaning by the social group. [873]

Serving as the guiding framework for this model, identity theory built on the ideas of James, Mead, and others. The RRIS model found use in identity theory's key constructs of *identity salience* and *identity commitment*.[874] A person's identities, according to Stryker, are arranged in what he refers to as the *salience hierarchy*.[875] While the identity's positioning on the hierarchy depends on either its *interactional* or *affective commitment* to the social network tied to the identity.[876] Realizing how significant the construct of commitment is to predicting the salience of an identity, I set out to learn more about its details and found that identity theorists leave many unanswered questions regarding its antecedents, its motivational factors, its maintenance, its rewards, and its relationship to emotions. I became most interested in what motivates a person to build a strong commitment to an identity.

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[871] Stryker and Burke, "The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory," 286.
[872] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 9.
[873] Ibid.
[874] Richard T. Serpe and Sheldon Stryker, "The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory," in *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research,* ed. Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L Vignoles (New York: Springer, 2011), 9060.
[875] Stryker and Serpe, "Personality, Roles, and Social Behavior," 206.
[876] Burke and Stets, Identity Theory, 47.

Therefore, the RRIS model compensated for identity theory's shortcomings with three prominent psychological theories: SDT, Possible Selves, and EVM. The SDT framework argues that environments that provide the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness promote psychological well-being and increases the probability that one will internalize an identity.[877] The RRIS model predicts that socializing agents of Black American Muslim adolescent males that offer a needs-supportive environment will increase both the religio-racial identity salience and religio-racial identity commitment.

STD's conceptualization of competence denotes one's desire for mastery and feelings of efficaciousness in one's environment.[878] Barriers such as social status, stereotype threat, and the lack of personal, interpersonal, and structural resources continue to block Black American males from feeling efficacious in their social environments. Consequently, Black American males have had to adopt coolness as a coping mechanism and a source of competence. The RRIS model instructs socializing agents to help Black American Muslim adolescent males exchange cool pose for Muslim cool, promote the growth mindset, provide competence feedback, and provide competence-supportive programming like the AA-RITES with modifications that reflex the Black American Muslim identity.

The second basic need, autonomy, is understood by SDT theorists as experiencing feelings of volition when performing the actions that align with one's values.[879] Studies show

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[877] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness 3.
[878] Richard M. Ryan and Arlen C. Moller, "Competence as Central, but Not Sufficient for High-Quality Motivation: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective," in Handbook of Competence and Motivation, ed. Andrew J. Elliot, Carol S. Dweck, and David S. Yeager, Second Edi (New York: The Guilford Press, 2017), 214.
[879] Ryan and Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," 74.

that Black American parenting styles tend toward authoritarian, highly controlling, and lacking affection.[880] The RRIS model suggest that parents of Black American Muslim adolescents employ the *cohesive-authoritative* parenting typology. This type of Black American family functions at a high level with regards to cohesion, love, support, and a healthy disciplinary style.[881]

Besides the lack of autonomy-support in the household, the teachers in the classrooms fail at providing Black American adolescent males with autonomy-support by judging them as adults, a practice known as *adultification*. The RRIS model calls on religious teachers to enhance the religio-racial classroom by offering three types of autonomy-support in the classroom: (a) *organizational autonomy support*, (b) *procedural autonomy support*, and (c) *cognitive autonomy support*. The third category, cognitive autonomy support, is the most important of the three.[882] This type of support is actualized when students are given the space to voice their perspectives and express their agreements or disagreements with something.[883] The RRIS model also suggests that religious teachers apply Reeves five autonomy-supportive behaviors. They are: (a) nurturing inner motivational resources, (b) providing explanatory rationales, (c) using noncontrolling, information language, (d) displaying patience to allow time for self-paced learning to occur, and

[880] Iheoma U. Iruka and Oscar Barbarin, "African American Children's Early Learning and Development," in Handbook of African American Pscyhology, ed. Helen A. Neville, Brendesha M. Tynes, and Shawn O. Utsey (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2009), 176.
[881] Mandara and Murray, "Development of an Empirical Typology of African American Family Functioning."
[882] Candice R. Stefanou et al., "Supporting Autonomy in the Classroom: Ways Teachers Encourage Student Decision Making and Ownership," Educational Psychologist 39, no. 2 (2004): 101.
[883] Stefanou et al.

(e) acknowledging and accepting expressions of resistance and negative feelings.[884] Furthermore, Muslim socializing agents should receive training in RJ, in particular the talking circles. Punitive approaches to discipline have been disastrous for the Black American male population.

The third basic need that enhances well-being is relatedness. According to SDT, relatedness-support refers to feeling looked after by others, feeling a sense of belonging, and feeling like one's role is essential in one's social group.[885] As a means of providing relatedness-support, the RRIS model recommends for Muslim parents to practice unconditional positive regard, which is showing love and affection to the child regardless of their state.[886] With respect to religious teachers in the Muslim context, the RRIS model provides strategies for helping Black American Muslim adolescent males feel appreciated, special, and significant. One of these strategies is Carl Rogers' person-centered approach. The person-centered approach emphasizes the use of genuineness, acceptance, and empathic understanding.

To this end, the RRIS model declares that if socializing agents do not provide a needs-supportive environment for Black American Muslim adolescent males, this group will never fully internalize their religio-racial identity. Needs-supportive environments direct Black American Muslim adolescent males towards recapturing their *fitrah*, actualizing their potential, and discovering their true selves. Coming from a history of being controlled and restricted, Black American Muslim adolescent males must be given opportunities to exercise self-determination

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[884] Johnmarshall Reeve, "Teaching in Ways That Support Students' Autonomy," Empirical Research in Teaching and Learning: Contributions from Social Psychology 19, no. January (2011): 95-96.
[885] Ryan and Deci, Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness, 3.
[886] Rogers, A Way of Being, 115.

by having agency over their own movement and not being forced into behaviors that do not express their creative potential.[887] For this reason, basic psychological needs are a major component of the RRIS model.

The second major component of the RRIS model is the possible selves framework. Possible selves are the cognitively constructed future selves that we hope to become, that we expect to become, and that we fear we may become. [888] Possible selves, moreover, play an essential role in motivating people to achieve their goals. For Black American Muslim adolescent males, possible selves can motivate the achievement of highly salient religio-racial identities. Imagining a successful religious future self can increase religious behaviors in the present.

The RRIS model promotes balanced possible selves for Black American Muslim adolescent males. The individual who lacks this type of balance engages in antisocial behaviors without considering the repercussions. Conversely, balanced possible selves describes the adolescent who has constructed a plausible and an avoidable possible self that function counter to one another. Drawing from the studies, the RRIS model emphasizes positive racial identity as a means of promoting balance.[889] There are three aspects of racial identity that have been shown to predict balance, including (a) awareness of racism, (b) a sense of connectedness, and (c)

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[887] Jennifer G. La Guardia, "Developing Who I Am: A Self-Determination Theory Approach to the Establishment of Healthy Identities," Educational Psychologist 44, no. 2 (2009): 95.
[888] Daphna Oyserman and Stephanie Fryberg, "The Possible Selves of Diverse Adolescents: Content and Function Across Gender, Race and National Origin," in Possible Selves: Theory Research and Applications, ed. Jennifer L. Kerpelman and Curtis S. Dunkel (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2006), 19-20.
[889] Daphna Oyserman and K. Harrison, "Implications of Cultural Context: African American Identity and Possible Selves," in Prejudice: The Target's Perspective, ed. Janet K. Swim and Charles Stangor (San Diego: Academic Press, 1998), 286.

embedded achievement.[890] Interacting with others and receiving balance-oriented feedback is another effective means for balanced possible selves. This means that possible selves that are not validated by socializing agents will most likely not become a part of the self. The RRIS model, therefore, empowers the socializing agents to actively promote balanced possible selves with proven strategies and programming.

To this end, the RRIS model suggests that Black American Muslim adolescent males must be able to derive their possible selves from what Lockwood and Kunda term as *superstars* or individuals of outstanding achievement in their social context. Individuals adopt these superstar roles models through the process of social comparison. Social comparison scholars assert that a person will most likely compare themselves to the role model that is a close other, that has domain self-relevance, and their exceptional characteristics are attainable.[891,892] That is, Black American Muslim adolescent males need role models who are also Black American Muslim males. To provide further guidance regarding role models, the RRIS model presents the Religio-Racial Spiritual Observational Learning table that highlights five types of role model for Black American Muslim adolescent males: (a) congregational superstar, (b) religious director superstar, (c) historical luminary superstar, (d) prophetic superstar, and (e) scriptural superstar.

The RRIS also recommends possible selves intervention programs that should be employed at every mosque, Muslim school, and organization that serve Black American Muslim adolescent males. These interventions should be held for multiple weeks and include one-on-one

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[890] Ibid.
[891] Abraham Tesser, Murray Millar, and Janet Moore, "Some Affective Consequences of Social Comparison and Reflection Processes: The Pain and Pleasure of Being Close," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 54, no. 1 (1988): 50.
[892] Lockwood and Kunda, "Superstars and Me: Predicting the Impact of Role Models on the Self," 93.

time with a counselor as well as work in small groups. Borrowing from the Possible Selves Program, the possible selves tree activity can be used to foster goal setting. The Possible Selves program also features six components that the RRIS model will adopt: (a) *discovering*, (b) *thinking*, (c) *sketching*, (d) *reflecting*, (e) *growing*, and (f) *performing*.[893] Drawing from the School-to-Jobs Program, the RRIS model will adopt the ideas of constructing timelines, strategies boards, and getting parents to join some of the sessions.

Finally, the RRIS model presents the hermeneutical tool of story-linking for religious teachers. The *imam* that delivers Friday sermons and teaches classes can use the story-liking lens to connect a narrative from a different time period and context to today's life. Black American Muslim adolescent males are more likely to derive possible selves from historical luminaries that have narratives that connect to their lives. For instance, many Black American religious teachers connect the struggle of Moses to the struggle of being Black in America.

In sum, possible selves are critical for Black American Muslim adolescent males attempting to map out successful futures. Black American Muslim adolescent males need role models from within their religio-racial network. Observational spiritual learning can contribute to one's affective commitment to a religio-racial identity. The RRIS model calls for socializing agents to provide available and visible role models, possible selves intervention, and use hermeneutical tools to promote possible selves.

The third major component of the RRIS model is the EVM framework. EVM addresses motivational factors that prompt the performance of religious role behaviors. For example, what

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[893] Michael F. Hock, Donald D. Deshler, and Jean B. Schumaker, "Enhancing Student Motivation Through the Pursuit of Possible Selves," in *Possible Selves: Theory Research and Applications,* ed. Jennifer L. Kerpelman and Curtis S. Dunkel (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2006), 211-14.

motivates a person to perform their five daily prayers, give charity, forgive others, fast and so forth? EVM contends that people chose some behaviors over others because they feel a sense of competence and expect that they will perform well at those behaviors. They also attribute behavioral choices to subjective task value or the value that an individual assigns to a task. The RRIS model features EVM's four task values including interest value, attainment value, utility value, and perceived cost. Interest value speaks to the enjoyment that a person experiences performing the activity.[894] Hidi and her colleagues provided the RRIS model with useful details pertaining to interest.

First of all, interest is divided into two types, including: situational and individual. Situational interest describes a situation in which someone's attention is grabbed.[895] Individual interest is more stable and is based on a person's characteristics and traits.[896] The RRIS model also utilizes the four-phase model of interest development: (a) *triggered situational*, (b) *maintained situational*, (c) *emerging individual*, and (d) *well-developed individual interest*.[897] These phases can be used to measure the development of an activity in the religious domain. The RRIS model helps socializing agents develop strategies to grab and keep the attention of Black American Muslim adolescent males. The aim is for religious task to become well-developed individual interest.

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[894] Wigfield, Rosenzweig, and Eccles, "Achievement Values: Interventions, Interactions, and Future Achievements," 116.
[895] Suzanne Hidi and K Ann Renninger, "The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development," [Artículo de Revista] Educational Psychologist 41, no. 2 (2006): 113.
[896] Ibid.
[897] K. Ann Renninger and Hidi Suzanne E., The Power of Interest for Motivation and Engagement (New York: Routledge, 2016), 12.

Situational interest is usually associated with novelty and the person would like to gather more knowledge about a topic.[898] Black American Muslim adolescent males should be given new experience taken to new places and introduced to exciting new topics. Religious teachers must involve their students in the learning process and allow them to offer input and have provision of choice with regards to the direction of the course. Black American Muslim adolescent males need religious lessons that contribute to solving real-world problems. For instance, does Islam address racism, poverty, or mass incarceration? Religious teachers must be able to communicate religion's usefulness and relevance in the real world. The RRIS model promotes the strategy of personalization as a means of connecting students to more knowledge about topics of high prior interest. For example, a student who is interested in wrestling may receive satisfaction in hearing that Prophet Muhammad was also interested in wrestling. Beside this, working in groups and learning with others can also foster interest.

The RRIS model also directs socializing agents to raise attainment value of religious tasks for Black American Muslim adolescent males. This value involves tasks that allows a person to affirm their identities. The RRIS model recommends that religious teachers of Black American Muslim adolescent males pay special attention to the racial identity considering its salience. Borrowing from Cross's Psychological *Nigrescence* model, socializing agents should help Black American Muslim adolescent males achieve the *internalization-commitment* stage of racial identity. Religious teachers of Black American Muslim adolescent males should teach them about the Black companions around Prophet Muhammad and the contributions that

[898] Jerome I. Rotgans and Henk G. Schmidt, "Situational Interest and Learning: Thirst for Knowledge," Learning and Instruction 32 (2014): 38.

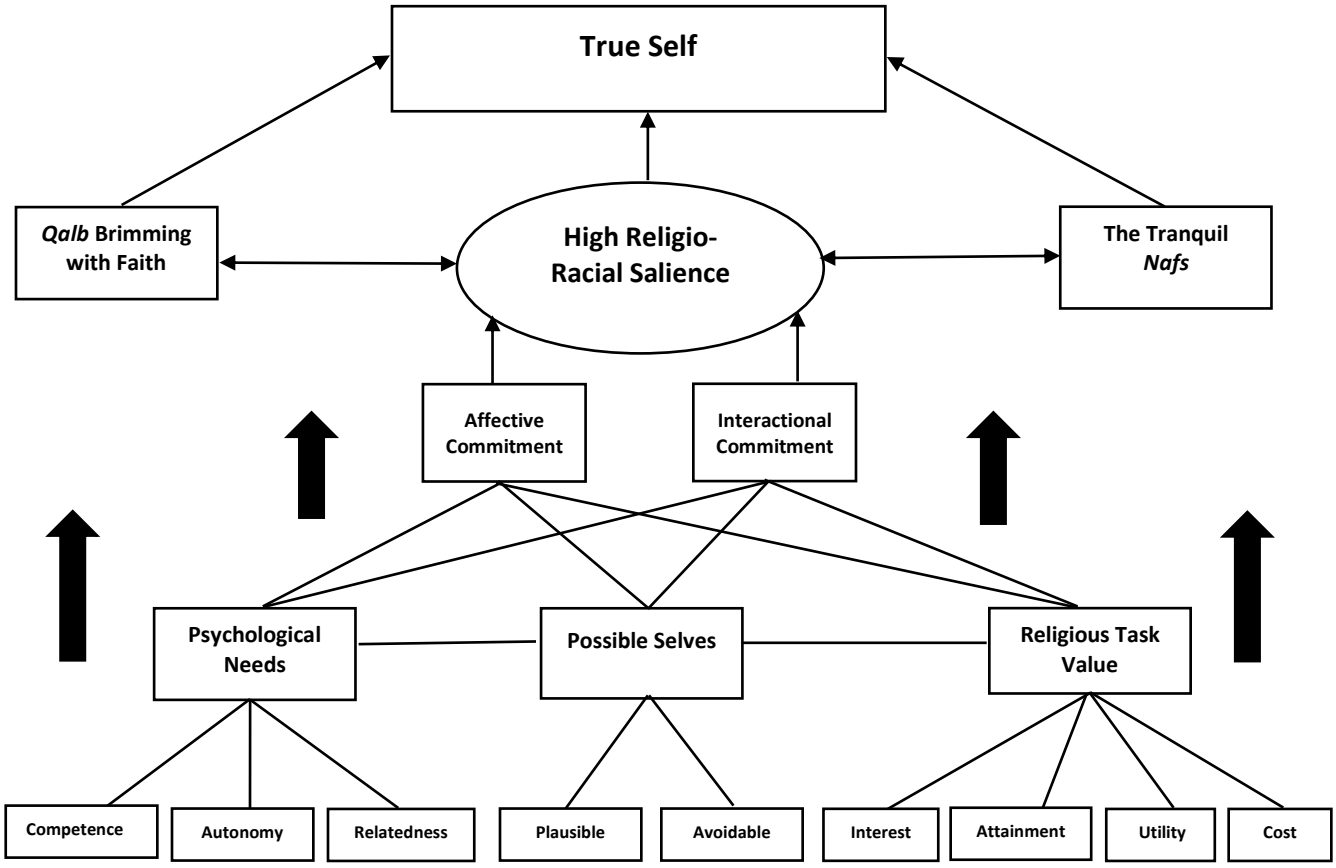
Africans brought to Islam. Also, the burgeoning field of Africana Islamic Studies can contribute much to the religious classroom.

The RRIS model also sees importance in the utility value of religious task. Black American Muslim adolescent males need to know that their performance of religious tasks will positively impact their future by contributing to the achievement of future goals. Religious teachers of Black American Muslim adolescent males must offer utility value information about obligatory prayer, learning the Arabic language, and other religious activities. The RRIS model suggests that students are given relevance writing interventions that give them the opportunity to write, from their perspective, about the relevance of religious tasks. Furthermore, parents should be given utility value information so that they can also remind their children about the relevance and usefulness of religious rituals and acts.

Lastly, the RRIS model presents perceived cost value as a meaningful construct that touches on motivation with regard to religious tasks. Cost value is influenced by four factors: 1) task effort cost, 2) outside effort cost, 3) loss of valued alternatives, and 4) emotional cost.[899] For many Black American adolescent males being religious, especially being Muslim, has a high cost. This may mean being insulted, bullied, and considered uncool which may result in negative emotions. Also, a religious event may take place at the same time as another activity that is higher in interest value. This being the case, socializing agents can lower the cost of religious task value by providing a needs-supportive environment for Black American Muslim adolescent males. They can also use this model's recommendations for interest, attainment, and utility value of religious task.

[899] Jessica Kay Flake et al., "Measuring Cost: The Forgotten Component of Expectancy-Value Theory," Contemporary Educational Psychology 41, no. March (2015): 232.

7.1 High Religio-Racial Salience



These three components of the RRIS model contribute to the development of the religio-racial self. The religio-racial self can be sorted into three stages: *low religio-racial salience, medium religio salience,* and *high religio-racial salience*. The religio-racial identity that is low on the salience hierarchy indicates that socializing agents are not providing basic psychological needs, are not promoting the balance between plausible and avoidable possible selves, and are not employing subjective task value strategies. The religio-racial idenity that is medium on the salience hierarchy indicates that socializing agents are somewhat providing basic psychological needs, are somewhat promoting the balance between plausible and avoidable possible selves, and

are somewhat employing subjective task value strategies. Whereas the religio-racial identity that is high on the salience hierarchy indicates that socializing agents are doing their utmost to provide basic psychological needs, are doing their utmost to promote balance between plausible and avoidable possible selves and are doing their utmost to employ subjective task value strategies.

Recommendation for Implementation

As promising as this model seems to appear, I do not advocate for organizational leaders to pick this model up and start immediately implementing its parts. That is because attempting to change the culture of any organization will come with a myriad of challenges. During the early stages of a paradigm shift, for example, a few groups may be formed through interpersonal networking, including those who support and others who oppose the new paradigm. If the organization is not prepared for aggressive opposition, the innovative idea may never get off the ground and it may instead cause irreparable damage to the organization or the community. For this reason, I suggest the work of Everett M. Rogers and his *Diffusion Model of Innovation.* His model provides insight on how to transition into a new paradigm and better manage opposition and the resistance to change.

To help change agents, Rogers conceptualizes five steps in the implementation process: (a) knowledge, (b) persuasion, (c) decision, (d) implementation, and (e) confirmation.[900] *Knowledge* occurs when individuals learn about the new idea along with its key concepts.[901] *Persuasion* takes place when individuals began to form their opinions and attitudes about the

[900] Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, Fourth Edi (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 20.
[901] Ibid.

new model.[902] The first two stages are critical in that change agent must provide material, workshop, information session, or whatever means that will minimize uncertainty. The *decision* step describes when the individuals behave in ways that express their approval or disapproval of the innovation.[903] *Implementation* occurs when the model gets put into use.[904] While *confirmation* is the step in which people seek to solidify their confidence in the new model.[905] Change agents should put together a well thought out strategy that takes these steps into consideration.

Recommendation for Future Research

This study contributes conceptually to Black American Muslim identity literature. The research in this study demonstrated how socializing agents can either develop or degenerate the internal psychological states of Black American adolescents. The finding has implications for religious teachers, parents, siblings, congregation members, and anyone who actively participates in the socialization of Black American Muslim adolescent males. The RRIS framework provides a theoretical foundation that can be adopted by religious households and institutions. Furthermore, future research should include a mixed-methods design consisting of interviews of Black American Muslim adult males whose Muslim identities have remained salient throughout their adolescent years to the present as well as Black American males who chose to opt out of the religious life. What role does psychological needs, possible selves, and subjective task value play in their religio-racial identity development or degeneration? I anticipate that the findings will solidify the arguments I have made and perhaps I will make new discoveries.

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[902] Ibid.
[903] Ibid.
[904] Ibid.
[905] Ibid.

Conclusion

For this final chapter, I succinctly summarized the RRIS model. Additionally, I discussed some practical considerations to implementing the strategies that I have outlined. The RRIS model is an identity development paradigm that provides the necessary information for socializing agents to construct an environment that promotes healthy identity development and psychological well-being for Black American Muslim adolescent males. More importantly, this study has sought solutions for a population that has been grossly neglected. The Religious folk need a better understanding of Black boys, their internal states, their challenges, their thoughts, and their needs. I believe that if socializing agents understand and apply what is contained in the RRIS model, they will be able to raise a Moses and overcome the plots of the symbolic Pharaohs. May God accept this effort and place blessings in it.

Closing Reflections

Writing this dissertation was an experience that went beyond the act of writing words on these white sheets of paper. Several ironies have led to this being one of the most memorable experiences of my life that will seemingly shape the trajectory of my life and leadership. I completed the first draft of this dissertation's outline on March 31, 2019, the same day that acclaimed rapper and entrepreneur, Ermias "Nipsey Hussle" Asghedom was murdered. This tragedy took place at the Marathon clothing store, mere blocks away from the school I am the founding director of.

I admired his work and we co-sponsored a voter's drive event for the neighborhood. Also, in June, I presided over the funeral prayer of a 34-year-old Black American Muslim male who was killed in a targeted shooting outside of his home. Later, in November, I performed a funeral prayer for a 47-year-old Black American Muslim male who was shot in the back by law

enforcement. A few weeks later, I performed a funeral for another young Black American Muslim male who passed away in his car.

As if that was not enough, I completed this dissertation on the same day I performed a ceremonial washing, shrouding, and funeral prayer for my brother-in-law, a 19-year-old Black American Muslim male who was murdered on December 27th while in his vehicle. This was not the way I imagined celebrating the conclusion of my dissertation. Not to mention that the background music throughout writing this dissertation was the news reports about Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Dijon Kizzee, Jacob Blake, and others. All these incidents made this dissertation deeply personal.

Although the writing process is coming to an end, I gather from this dissertation experience that the remainder of my life will be dedicated to helping improve the conditions for our Black boys. May Almighty God bless all Black American adolescent males with good health, wealth, and psychological well-being. For the young men whom I had the honor of performing their funeral prayer, may God bless them with the highest level of Paradise and bring comfort to their families.

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